

Bringing it All to the Table:
Examining Variance in Strategic Approaches within the Six-party Talks

by

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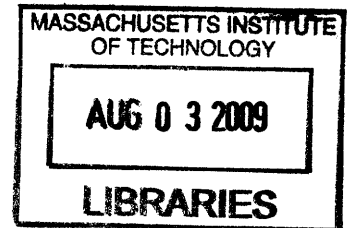
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ABSTRACT

In the approaches seen at the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program, why did states faced with the same security problem adopt different strategies? Answering this question will bring understanding to why the process has proceeded in fits and starts, as the countries negotiating with Pyongyang – China, Japan, Russia, South Korea, and the United States – often struggle to coordinate strategy in their quest to resolve a grave issue of international security.

This paper approaches the question by taking up three possible drivers behind strategy among the five negotiating countries – realist calculations, domestic political institutions, and national identity – and, tracing each country's strategy within the talks, identifies the most likely of these drivers for each state.

This study finds that while the United States, China, and Russia bring primarily realist concerns to the table, they employ separate strategies toward the North Korean nuclear issue, reflecting differing drivers and goals. In addition, South Korea and Japan see their strategies driven by issues related to national identity and domestic politics. In looking at the origins of these drivers, this study finds that China's realist drive stems largely from its particular vision of economic and geopolitical growth; Japan's push for a resolution to the kidnapping issue stems from politicians' aim for domestic political popularity made easier through Japan's lack of a history of relations with North Korea; Russia's realist drive derives from the Putin-led push to regain a semblance of its historical sphere of influence; South Korea's focus on peninsular engagement comes from a renewed nationalism, its legacy as a "divided nation," and a reimagining of the North Korea threat; and the United States' concentration on realist factors is derived from unique aspects of the post-September 11, 2001 security environment as well as a reassertion of regional goals that underscores U.S.-China competition.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| I. Introduction..... | 5 |
| II. Research Design..... | 16 |
| III. The Six-party Talks: A Brief History..... | 20 |
| IV. Literature Review..... | 27 |
| V. The Five States at the Negotiating Table with North Korea..... | 32 |
| 1. China..... | 32 |
| 2. Japan..... | 46 |
| 3. Russia..... | 57 |
| 4. South Korea..... | 65 |
| 5. The United States..... | 77 |
| 6. Summary of Major Influences..... | 91 |
| VI. Policy Implications and Conclusion..... | 92 |
| Appendix: Strategies Brought to the Six-party Talks..... | 96 |

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“Each state pursues its own interests, however defined, in ways it judges best. Force is a means of achieving the external ends of states because there exists no consistent, reliable process of reconciling the conflicts of interests that inevitably arise *among similar units* in a condition of anarchy.” – Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War*¹

“There is no magic formula for managing a rising challenger and maintaining international peace and stability. [...] Even if the status quo defenders are fortunate enough to operate within an international structure conducive to successful management, they must still search for the right policy devices to keep the peace, maintain the integrity of the system, and ultimately convert the revisionist state into a status quo one. Moreover, the success of any effort to manage a power transition is largely a function of factors that are *internal* to the rising and declining powers themselves.” – Randall Schweller, “Managing the Rise of Great Powers”²

I. Introduction

In the approaches seen at the six-party talks on North Korea’s nuclear program, why did states faced with the same security problem adopt different strategies? Answering this question will bring understanding to why the process has proceeded in fits and starts, as the countries negotiating with Pyongyang – China, Japan, Russia, South Korea, and the United States – often struggle to coordinate strategy in their quest to resolve a grave issue of international security.

Existing studies have taken a comparative approach to the strategies each party brings to the talks. While these accounts begin to address *how* the six parties have had trouble matching approaches, they prove inadequate to explain *why* states would possess preferences leading to the particular strategic choices. This paper approaches the question by taking up three possible drivers behind strategy among the five negotiating countries – realist calculations, domestic political institutions, and national identity – and, tracing each country’s strategy within the talks, identifies the most likely of these drivers for each state.

This study finds that while the United States, China, and Russia bring primarily realist concerns to the table, they employ separate strategies toward the North Korean nuclear issue, reflecting differing drivers and goals. In addition, South Korea and Japan see their strategies

¹ Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 238. (Emphasis mine.)

² Randall Schweller, “Managing the Rise of Great Powers: History and Theory,” in Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross, eds., *Engaging China: The Management of an Emerging Power* (London, UK: Routledge, 1999), p. 25. (Emphasis mine.)

driven by issues related to national identity and domestic politics. In looking at the origins of these drivers, this study finds that China's realist drive stems largely from its particular vision of economic and geopolitical growth; Japan's push for a resolution to the kidnapping issue stems from politicians' aim for domestic political popularity made easier through Japan's lack of a history of relations with North Korea; Russia's realist drive derives from the Vladimir Putin-led push to regain a semblance of its historical sphere of influence; South Korea's focus on peninsular engagement comes from a renewed nationalism, its legacy as a "divided nation," and a reimagining of the North Korea threat; and the United States' concentration on realist factors is derived from unique aspects of the post-September 11, 2001 security environment as well as a reassertion of regional goals that underscores U.S.-China competition.

The major implications of these findings are twofold. First, the United States' realist-based model of hub and spokes alliances is ineffective in a multilateral format if its alliance partners, South Korea and Japan, hold domestic concerns that trump the goals of the alliance, nor if China's regional role as rising power is not taken into account. Second, although policymakers in China, Russia, and the United States hold primarily realist concerns, this does not mean they necessarily agree as to the greatest threat they face – thus, the direct North Korea threat may be secondary to calculations of relative power maximization.

On June 27, 2008, television screens flashed with the image of North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear cooling tower as it crumbled to dust. While largely a symbolic gesture – the tower can easily be rebuilt, and Pyongyang has already tested a nuclear device – the implosion marked a major symbolic gesture toward North Korea's intent to denuclearize.³

This symbolic gesture was also five years and six rounds of diplomatic talks in the making. The six-party talks, a series of meetings in Beijing involving the two Koreas, Japan, Russia, China, and the United States, has yielded both landmark agreements and diplomatic dead-ends. The unique six-party multilateral format means that progress is reached only when the five members attempting to bargain with North Korea agree on an approach to the issue, and impasse is inevitable when one or more members decides to follow a separate tack.

Indeed, throughout the negotiations, each of the five states dealing with North Korea has explored a range of strategies: incentives or deterrents often uncoordinated with those of others – or, as one analyst puts it less optimistically, state actions within the talks have been a "mix of

³ "N. Korea Destroys Nuclear Reactor Tower," CNN, June 27, 2008.

hedging, denial, and avoidance of shared responsibility among North Korea's neighbors.”⁴

This inability to coordinate policy on the North Korea nuclear issue has already taken its toll: Pyongyang tested an estimated 1 kiloton nuclear device on October 9, 2006 and, depending on the source and method of calculation, may have reprocessed enough plutonium to possess between six to twelve additional nuclear weapons.⁵

Current literature on the six-party talks addresses *how* the six parties have had trouble coordinating policies and strategies, but does not provide satisfactory explanation as to *why* states or decision-makers within them would come to choose their particular strategies. In addition, the analytical lenses scholars have employed to examine the six-party talks require further development, as existing accounts rely too heavily upon realism-based analysis without exploring other potential explanatory factors. Finally, as many of the studies are confined to two-country comparisons, they are limited in terms of their ability to provide a thorough analysis of the full range of factors at play within the six-party process.

All of these leave the larger question unexplained – why five states faced with the same security threat would choose such a wide range of separate strategies. This study enters the discourse on the six-party talks with the goal of providing a deeper understanding of why the process has been repeatedly weakened or brought to an impasse due to lack of strategic alignment on the part of the five parties negotiating with North Korea.

States (or the decision-makers within them) deal with threats via a range of strategies. These possible tactics can be measured along an axis moving from strategies of engagement to those of containment.⁶ In the case of engagement tactics, we observe states or state actors using incentives, such as economic aid and concessions. In the case of containment strategies, we observe states or state actors employing pressure tactics, such as economic sanctions and threats to use force. Those practicing engagement usually aim to “socialize” the rising power into accepting the established regional and global order. This may encompass slight adjustments to the existing order, but without fundamental compromises, and with the goal of avoiding conflict

⁴ Scott Snyder, “Responses to North Korea’s Nuclear Test: Capitulation or Collective Action?” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Autumn 2007), pp. 33-43.

⁵ James Cotton, “North Korea and the Six-party Process: Is a Multilateral Resolution of the Nuclear Issue Still Possible?” *Asian Security*, Vol. 3, No. 1, (2007), p. 31; “After the North Korea Nuclear Breakthrough: Compliance or Confrontation?” International Crisis Group, April 30, 2007; Joel S. Wit, “Enhancing U.S. Engagement with North Korea,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Spring 2007), pp. 53-66; Michael J. Mazarr, “The Long Road to Pyongyang; A Case Study in Policymaking without Direction,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 5 (New York, Sept/Oct 2007), pp. 75-93.

⁶ For details on the following development of this conceptualization, see Randall Schweller, “Managing the Rise of Great Powers: History and Theory,” pp. 15-25.

at all costs. Those practicing containment generally aim not to defeat the rising power but to stymie it from rising any further, so as to prevent an upset in the global balance of power. In the case of containment, actors cannot rule out the use of force. Any mixture of both strategies, falling somewhere along the axis between the two poles, is of course possible, as well.

In order to clearly reveal the strategies taken at the six-party talks, I examine the range of red lines, green lines, incentives and pressure tactics each set of negotiators, save for the North Korean team, has brought to the table at each meeting, offering a systematic audit of the tactics each state has employed over the past five years of negotiations.⁷ This process trace of the five years of talks picks up two types of variance in the strategies of the five players: variance between states' opinions on the best approach to take at given junctures during the six-party process, and variance within individual states' tactics over the duration of the talks. The fact that five states facing the same security threat would employ a range of tactics both individually and collectively suggests that divergent drivers are at work in each case. With that in mind, I seek to examine which of three factors – realist concerns, domestic political institutions, and national identity – holds the most influence over that state's strategic choices within the six-party talks. I will then trace the origins of the most salient explanatory factor for each state, and conclude with policy implications of the findings.

My hypothesis consists of two related predictions. First, states within the six-party talks identified by realist scholars as either the regional economic and military hegemon (the United States), a great economic power (Japan) or a rising potential great power (China) will largely see realist concerns manifest in their strategies pursued within the talks, their primary interest being power maximization linked to security concerns. Second, the countries that for reasons of economic decline (Russia) or a combination of mid-level economic status and comparatively small-scale military power (South Korea) are not considered part of the rising great power equation will reveal strategies less dictated by realist concerns and more within the areas of domestic political institutions or national identity.⁸

⁷ By "green line," I mean a set of actions that a state's negotiators have identified that, should North Korea complete, result in the awarding of certain incentives. I need to clarify my use of the term "red line." For the most part, the traditional definition holds – a red line represents a "do not cross" warning to a state against a particular behavior, with the threat of punishment should the state breach this warning. However, North Korea has crossed several of these red lines throughout the talks, and while it has been punished for its actions, the former red line has been replaced with a new one, calling into question the definition of "red line" if North Korea is clearly able to cross. Therefore, to clarify, I use the concept of a red line to mean a set of actions the other five parties' negotiators have identified that, should North Korea commit, would result in a certain set of sanctions or containment tactics designed to "punish" the state, rather than an 'unbreachable' ultimatum.

⁸ For identification of rising and great powers in the region, as well as "calculation" of a state's power

There are several reasons to select these variables for study. Realism has held pride of place for several decades in explanations of how states deal with threats; it thus cannot be ignored as a possible explanation for strategies toward dealing with North Korea's nuclear program. But if scholars do seek explanations of state behavior separate from those offered by realism, they often employ either domestic structural factors or identity politics as their lens, or sometimes combinations of both. Indeed, several scholars have made convincing cases for these two factors trumping the explanatory power of realist calculations in analyzing state behavior in certain regions, prime among them Asia, where four of the five countries under study in this paper are located.⁹ In addition, when comparing the countries of Asia to one another, these second two variables display a greater amount of variance than they do in a comparison of European states – modern state relations in Europe being the model for the realist conception of international interaction. Specifically, the type and character of domestic political systems vary widely among each country in Northeast Asia, its nations holding a full range of types of government, from centralized to decentralized, and from communist to a wide range of democratic systems. Finally, the historical experience in the Northeast Asian region is necessarily unique from that of Western Europe: there have been different and non-analogous wars, alliances, and shifts in power distribution. As a result of these historical differences, individual national identities are extraordinarily strong in Northeast Asia in a way divergent from the situation found in many modern Western European states.

Given these reasons for selecting realist concerns, domestic political institutions, and national identity as my three variables (numbered 1.) to 3.) in the proceeding section), I will provide a more thorough explanation of what comprises each set of concerns, as well as what we might expect if one of these variables is driving state strategy regarding the North Korea threat.

1.) As I will employ it in this paper, realism posits the state as unitary, rational actor as its base unit of analysis in looking at the relations between nations. The international setting is an arena entirely in a state of nature – anarchy. This anarchic environment is compounded by the

status, see Kenneth Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Fall 1993), pp. 44-79; Aaron Friedburg, "Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Winter 1993/94), pp. 5-33; John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (Norton, New York, 2001).

⁹ See David C. Kang, "Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Frameworks," *International Security*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Spring 2003); T.J. Pempel, *Remapping East Asia: The Construction of a Region* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2004); Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997); Thomas U. Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany and Japan* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

fact that there exists no sovereign to guarantee state survival. States are responsible for their own security. This places a premium on self-help, resulting in unilateral, competitive, and zero-sum policies, as states seek at a minimum to survive. The insecurity of this environment renders states especially concerned with shifts in the relative distribution of power through material – military and economic – capabilities.¹⁰

Specifically, the structure of the international system compels states to maximize security. They will do so both in the short term, by responding to rising threats, and in the long term, by maximizing relative power and capabilities. The former is accomplished through balancing via alliances with allies that share a common interest in deflecting the threat, and the latter is effected through a buildup of military and economic might relative to its would-be challengers.¹¹

However, a state takes into account the ability to maximize its security based on its calculation of which states present the greatest challenge to its relative power; this means that the state it seeks to balance against may not be the seemingly immediate rising threat but perhaps another rival deemed more threatening to its interests. In other words, as state interests involve a calculation of how an outcome might affect a state's relative power, a state's calculation of its stakes in the outcome of an international negotiation might lead it to attempt to limit the power of another rival, rather than to restrain or appease the immediate threat.

In addition, because state interests are what we seek to examine, we need to be specific about what comprises "realist" concerns, as a state's domestic political institutions and national identity can shape how a state sees its interests. Fearon (1998) provides a useful method for doing so, breaking realist understandings of state behavior into two categories.¹² In the first category, the state need only be unitary and rational in its consideration of other states' moves in its quest for relative power gain. In the second category, the state is not only unitary and rational, but differences between states other than those immediately linked to the distribution of power cannot enter into explanations of choice.¹³ These differences can encompass state preferences,

¹⁰ Johnathan Mercer, "Anarchy and Identity," *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Spring 1995), pp. 229-52; Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979); Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1987); Muthaia Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

¹¹ An alliance under realism is a temporary arrangement formed in response to a shift in power; alliances and alignments are ways to enhance national power and distribute costs. For elaborations of the definition of realism I employ, see Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*; Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*.

¹² Fearon, James D. "Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations." *Annual Review of Political Science* 1 (1998): 289-313.

¹³ See Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* for details of this variant.

regime types, a state's political culture, whether the state is a democracy, or whether the same party controls both the executive and the legislature in a presidential system – any unit-level attributes of particular states outside of relative power. I will employ this latter category in my definition of realist concerns.

If realism is a primary factor in determining state choices, we should observe strategies at the six-party talks based on each state's desire to maximize security or power based on its calculation of interests. Thus, one can have multiple “realist” explanations based on how each views the stakes: in the case of the six-party talks, accomplishing DPRK denuclearization must be weighed against what it would mean in terms of increased U.S. influence in the region, should the negotiations be dominated by U.S. preferences. Therefore, we might see the North Korea threat figure less heavily into a given state's realist calculus, given other structural concerns.

There are several predictions regarding specific actions we might observe. First, because of their concerns with the relative balance of power, states will balance against a rising military threat, not offer appeasement; the greater the immediate threat, the stronger the reaction. This will include both external balancing (alliances) and internal balancing (military and economic buildup). The greater the state's offensive capabilities, the more likely others will align against it, and the nearer a powerful state, the greater the tendency for those nearby to align against it.¹⁴ Again, a state may not include the newly rising threat in its calculus if it deems another regional state a threat to its place in the relative balance of power. In other words, two states can have different interests on the peninsula because of how the outcome might affect a state's relative power.

Second, states will be concerned about relative economic gains by the rising state; as such, states will limit their economic engagement with threatening states. Again, we could also see the six-party format used by a state to block the economic gains of another power in the region, if the state deems the threat or relative gain held by the other power greater than that held by North Korea.

Conversely, if states are not in fact unitary actors as dictated by a realist understanding of state action, then internal elements necessarily enter into a state's decision-making process – the so-called second-image approach. In moving to explain my two domestically-derived variables, I borrow two questions from Fearon (1998) that outline such an investigation. First, how important are domestic factors, relative to systemic or structural factors, in the explanation of state choice?

¹⁴ Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*.

And second, how, exactly, do domestic factors shape state choice?¹⁵ We can again return to the two categories of realist understandings of state behavior. In the first category, in which the state need only be unitary and rational in its quest for relative power gain, a non-realist, domestic variable-derived explanation of state action would envision a non-unitary state pursuing a “suboptimal” foreign policy due to the interactions of actors within the state. In the second category, in which the state is not only unitary and rational but any other state differences outside of those linked to power distribution are excluded from explaining behavior, the set of domestic variable-derived explanations also allows for arguments in which states’ characteristics other than power help explain their foreign policy choices, or in which domestic factors give rise to diverse state choices.¹⁶ Because I have chosen the latter definition of realism, my domestically oriented variables follow suit with the latter operationalization. That is, we will see choices states make when not taking into account realist concerns as ‘suboptimal’ ones given the security or power situation; they will also be choices unexplained by a state’s drive to maintain relative power, and better explained by domestic factors. Given this explanation of what we might see if state foreign policy choices are driven by domestic factors, I will now specify the two domestically-derived variables in my study: domestic political institutions and national identity.

2.) Domestic political institutions as I define them can drive state decisions through two components, both related to “domestic structure:” first, the structure of state organization; and second, the structure of state-society relations.¹⁷ The first involves competing political parties and policymaking bodies bringing pressures to bear on any state decision; the second encompasses the ways that interaction between the state and society – the media, interest groups, the electorate, and the general public – is able to influence policy decisions. While domestic actors are indeed influenced by ideational factors such as norms, I focus here upon the overarching structure of the domestic political realm in order to distinguish this variable from the more ideational aspects of identity. In short, I am asking: What about the domestic structural setup itself could affect policy choice?

In terms of the first factor, state structures can strengthen the ability of officials to carry out policies either in their own interests or in their particular interpretation of the national

¹⁵ Fearon, James D. "Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations."

¹⁶ A “suboptimal” choice or outcome is in reference to the foreign policy the principal would ideally desire in cases where a principal-agent analysis applies, and in other cases by reference to what the chief decision maker would likely prefer if intervening domestic factors were not a constraint to foreign policy choice.

¹⁷ For elaboration, see Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security*, 34-35.

interest.¹⁸ They can also produce situations in which policy decisions are the result of a power struggle between competing policymaking bodies. In terms of the second factor, the way in which state-society relations manifest themselves can serve to insulate state bodies and decision-makers from society – or make them vulnerable to public opinion. These patterns of inclusion and exclusion of certain groups in the policymaking process can be institutionalized in state structures over time.¹⁹

A domestic political approach assumes there are many policy choices having little to do with the sole pursuit of relative power or security. Thus, if domestic politics are a determinant of six-party strategy-making, then we should expect to observe distinct patterns in which a state changes its strategy more slowly or ‘less optimally’ than we would expect given surrounding objective, empirical factors such as shifts in the DPRK security threat. Instead, we will observe these decisions made along lines dictated by actors within the state’s domestic political landscape – such as a political party’s drive to maintain popularity or the playing out of a unique set of state-society relations.²⁰

3.) A second way that internal drivers can affect strategic choice is through a given state’s national identity. This ideational factor can be defined as “socially shared understandings of how the world is and should be,” providing a cognitive framework for shaping interests, preferences, worldview, and foreign policy actions.²¹ This framework in turn establishes a hierarchy among the political, sociocultural, and economic beliefs of the state, ordering the positions and worth of individuals and groups within that society, which includes extending legitimacy to social actions and movements.²² National identity also distinguishes the state in question from the rest of the international community, which in turn informs its international orientation and its definition of national interest. All of these elements are potentially manifest in the processes of policymaking

¹⁸ William W. Grimes, “Institutionalized Inertia: Japanese Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era,” in G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno, eds., *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), p. 358.

¹⁹ William W. Grimes, “Institutionalized Inertia: Japanese Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era,” p. 359.

²⁰ William W. Grimes, “Institutionalized Inertia: Japanese Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era,” pp. 360; Helen Milner, *Interests, Institutions and Information: Domestic Politics and International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Ikenberry, *Reasons of State: Oil Politics and the Capacities of American Government* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988); Henning, *Currencies and Politics in the United States, Germany, and Japan* (Washington: Institute for International Economics, 1994).

²¹ Thomas U. Berger, *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

²² Muthiah Alagappa, “Rethinking Security,” in Alagappa, ed. *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 36.

and policy implementation.²³

However, “national identity” constitutes an extremely broad category. In order to hone it into a specific driver for investigation, I wish to focus on two sets of influences of national identity that are most salient when looking at issues regarding security; one set of influences being normative in origin, and the other historical. I wish to examine what norms exist regarding the use of force as a valid tool of statecraft, and I wish to look at a state’s historical experience in world and regional affairs, for this provides the basis for a set of beliefs held by citizens and policymakers alike about what characterizes the state – and thus indicate what position it should seek or maintain within the established order, especially when it comes to issues of security.²⁴

Like other sets of societal norms, norms act as collective expectations, dictating preferred sets of behavior for actors. Studies examining normative elements within a given culture often divide norms into two general ways of operation: as rules defining actor identity (thus holding constitutive effects), and as standards specifying enactment of an already defined identity (holding regulatory effects). Norms regarding the use of force can fall into both categories, but it is the first category upon which I focus, as constitutive norms foster group identification and are at the root of social coordination, helping define a nation’s identity for actors within it.²⁵

The second component comprising national identity, collective memory of the past, is central in identity formation, for external historical experiences and national ones, such as politically defining moments like national liberation and dramatic political change, can have lasting impact on state identity, interests, and behavior.²⁶ In addition, a state’s understanding of the international system is often rooted in its interpretation of history.²⁷ Thus, examining a state’s historical experience is a way to identify manifestation of a unique collective identity.

Similar to domestic political structures, collective identities can compel actors to make choices that, from a rationalist perspective, are costly and/or serve no purpose.²⁸ Thus, if national identity is a primary factor behind a state’s choice of strategy at the six-party talks, we should see a state or decision-makers within that state making choices that seem incongruous or poor given surrounding objective, empirical factors linked to power or security. Instead, we would see a state react via established guidelines constituting national identity – such as, for example, a

²³ Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security*, pp. 31.

²⁴ Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security*, p. 5; Samuel S. Kim, *China and the World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994) pp. 10-13.

²⁵ Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security*, p. 5.

²⁶ Muthiah Alagappa, “Rethinking Security,” p. 21.

²⁷ Thomas U. Berger, *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific*.

²⁸ Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security*, p. 27.

culturally unique set of norms about whether or not using force is valid, a distinct form of nationalism, or notions about where the state should position itself in the global order that are based on a particular historical experience. This last factor can sometimes align with realist calculations, if identity factors drive the state in question to pursue a position of relative power and wealth in the global order.

This study finds that United States negotiators have brought to the six-party talks a mixed strategy leaning more toward containment, and one indeed stemming primarily from realist concerns related to the North Korea threat. It finds that South Korean negotiators' strategy of engagement at the six-party talks is fueled by issues of national identity and domestic political institutions rather than by realist calculations. However, while Chinese negotiators seem to follow a realist line of thinking at the six-party talks, so, too, do the Russian negotiators. In addition, in both cases, the states' six-party strategies lean toward engagement rather than containment of North Korea; instead, both states seem to be balancing against U.S. interests in the region. Finally, the study finds that in the case of Japan, instead of forming strategy at the six-party talks primarily through a realist lens, sees the domestic institutional setup come into play, encouraging policymakers and politicians to bring the non-security-related concern of North Korea's kidnapping of Japanese citizens into its six-party negotiation strategy. Additionally, national identity, in terms of Japan's resurgent nationalism, also factors in its citizens' and policymakers' strong reactions to the kidnapping issue.

In tracing the origins of the primary drivers behind these strategies, this study finds that China's realist drive stems largely from its particular vision of economic and geopolitical growth; Japan's drive for a resolution to the kidnapping issue stems from jockeying for domestic political popularity as well as a rapid reconfiguring of its perception of North Korea; Russia's realist drive derives from the Putin-led push to regain a semblance of its historical sphere of influence; South Korea's focus on peninsular engagement comes from a renewed nationalism, its legacy as a "divided nation," and a post-democratization reimagining of national identity in terms of the North Korea threat; and the United States' concentration on realist factors is derived from unique aspects of the post-September 11, 2001 security environment as well as increased regional competition with China.

These findings hold several implications for policy. First, the United States needs to craft policy that takes into account the fact that its two main bilateral alliance partners in Northeast Asia – Japan and South Korea – are not necessarily looking at events in Northeast Asia through an exclusively or even primarily realist lens. Second, regional realist concerns do not necessarily

encompass perception of a nuclear North Korea as a threat per se, nor as the top strategic priority. In addition, the strategies of states employing a primarily realist framework may lie more heavily in balancing against U.S. regional hegemony than in acquiescing with its decision-making on matters of regional security. Finally, the North Korea nuclear crisis – or, indeed, any issue involving North Korea – cannot be solved without not only taking into domestic political and national identity concerns, as well as China’s new regional role as rising power.

I divide this paper into five main sections. I first go over my research design in more detail. Next, I summarize the history of the meetings themselves, in order to effectively analyze what existing approaches bring toward understanding the six-party talks. From this, I ascertain what scholars have and have not addressed in terms of the question of six-party strategies and their drivers. In the second section, I look at the range of concerns, red lines and green lines, and incentives and pressure tactics China, Japan, Russia, and South Korea, and the United States bring to the table, and from this delineate the range of strategies each state employs. Based on the above predictions for how each variable might drive policymaking decisions, I determine which of the three factors – realist interests, domestic institutions, and national identity – holds the most influence over that state’s strategy at the six-party talks, offering an explanation of the origins of the variable found to be the primary driver for each party. In the final section, I look at what these findings imply in terms of crafting strategy toward dealing with the North Korean nuclear threat.

II. Research Design

The dearth in coordination between the six-party players renders existing gaps in the literature particularly glaring. Analysts have provided some insight into what particular strategies the five players in question have brought to the six-party negotiations, but have not systematically looked at how and from where these strategies originated.

I seek to examine the range of what offers a given state’s negotiators have brought to the negotiating table as a systematic method to outline strategy. I look at the range of concerns, red lines and green lines, and incentives and pressure tactics that China, Japan, Russia, and South Korea, and the United States have brought to the table, and from this delineate the range of strategies each state has employed. To codify each country’s strategy or range of strategies, I use the axis of state reaction to a threat ranging from engagement to containment as described in this

paper's introduction.

In the next section of the paper, I determine which of three factors – realist interests, domestic institutions, and national identity – holds the most influence over that state's strategy at the six-party talks. I accomplish this by examining the range of strategies brought to the talks and, using the predictive models I have mapped out in the introduction for my three variables, identify the variable or variables that best explain the strategic choices of that country's policymakers during the six-party process. I follow this with a more detailed explanation of the origins of the variable found to be the primary driver for each party. In the final section, I look at what my findings imply in terms of crafting strategy toward dealing with the North Korean nuclear threat.

Three explanatory caveats are necessary. First, this study will not take up an analysis of the North Korean position for two reasons. The first is the unfortunate fact of working on any North Korean issue: the DPRK's extremely closed nature means any attempt to understand of its internal situation, drivers, and preferences beyond regime survival will be limited at best. Second, the purpose of this study is to examine the reasons for which the five countries attempting to offer a deal to North Korea have or have not come to a consensus; in this case, then, North Korean preferences and the drivers behind them need not be identified.

The second explanatory caveat is that there may be a certain amount of overlap in the variables' explanatory power for a certain preference, or the three variables may not fully explain certain strategic preferences. This study seeks to find the best possible explanatory match for the observed state preferences.

Finally, when looking into which variables best explain negotiation strategy at the six-party talks, our interest should not be in debating whether domestic or systemic factors are more important overall to understanding these choices. Rather, we should focus our effort on spelling out what foreign policy choices and results are predicted to occur given certain state assumptions.

1. Methodology

a. Hypothesis and Variables

My hypothesis consists of two related predictions. First, states within the six-party talks identified by realist scholars as either the regional economic and military hegemon (the United States), a great economic power (Japan) or a rising potential great power (China) will largely see realist concerns manifest in their strategies pursued within the talks, their primary interest being

power maximization linked to security concerns. Second, the countries that for reasons of economic decline (Russia) or a combination of mid-level economic status and comparatively small-scale military power (South Korea) are not considered part of the rising great power equation will reveal strategies less dictated by realist concerns and more within the areas of domestic political institutions or national identity.

(My null hypothesis is that a realist-based understanding of dynamics within the six-party talks – that is, the strategies of powerful states can be explained fully by realist thinking, and that the strategies of less powerful states are primarily driven not by realist concerns but by factors related domestic institutions or national identity – is false, and that alternate explanations are necessary on some or all counts.)

My independent variables are realist thought, domestic political institutions, and national identity. My dependent variable is a state's strategy at the six-party talks.

b. Case Selection and Research Aims

The six-party format is ideal in examining if, why, and how individual state strategies and/or domestic concerns are brought into the international policymaking process, as it requires Russia, China, the United States, South Korea and Japan to compromise upon such strategies and agree upon a mutual approach to dealing with North Korea in order for the security architecture to function in a full and effective manner. This is because any approach – be it diplomatic or military, incentives or sanctions – requires the acquiescence and material and/or economic support of the five parties.

My main empirical research aim is to perform a process trace on the approaches toward the North Korea nuclear issue taken by the states within the six-party format. Because my research question and hypotheses involve observed phenomena in specific states, the requirements related to case selection for controlled comparison do not apply. Therefore, this project's findings will not have general predictive power, but rather explanatory power in the case of the five countries under study.²⁹

²⁹ For further detail, see Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: BCSIA, 2004) and Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

c. Sources

My research involved both primary and secondary sources from each country under study. This included current academic literature on the topic, along with reports by non-governmental organizations and research institutions such as the International Crisis Group, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Congressional Research Service, the Department of Defense, the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, and the Defense Intelligence Agency. Where available, I employed the use of the equivalents of these organizations in the other nations under study. This also includes such primary-source materials as newspaper articles and published surveys. Other readily available primary sources related to security policy included national security strategies, diplomatic bluebooks, and defense white papers. I undertook some research in Korean; however, nearly all of the primary sources required for the five countries under study were available in English.

2. Contributions

This study will contribute to explaining a significant contemporary policy and security issue that is as of this writing still unresolved. In addition, it will address the lack in the current literature of a systematic audit of state strategies, as well as to help build a more comprehensive approach to explaining the process through which the five parties craft strategy on DPRK security issues. In turn, the findings will have applications to the study of policymaking in these countries on other security issues, as well as help to suggest further avenues for research, both theoretical and empirical.

Understanding the dynamics behind the strategic choices China, Japan, Russia, South Korea, and the United States have made during the six-party talks will provide greater insight into what is required to build an effective multilateral security regime in East Asia. It will also contribute to the evaluation of the six-party format as a diplomatic device – many see the six-party talks as an ineffective format, still sputtering forward after over half a decade, no clear end in sight; does what we see allow us to be optimistic about the proceedings, or should the nations involve seek changes to the format or a different architecture altogether? From this, we can more effectively weigh proposals to turn the six-party talks into a permanent regional multilateral framework.

Next, I will provide an overview of the events and concerns seen throughout the six-party

process. I do so in order to delineate the major issues at stake for each player as well as to pinpoint the major successes and failures of strategy coordination between China, Japan, Russia, South Korea, and the United States. This will in turn help to understand which factors the existing literature on the six-party talks has adequately addressed, and where it is lacking.

III. The Six-party Talks: A Brief History

Analysts disagree over whether the U.S. or North Korea bears primary responsibility for the rupture of the 1994 Agreed Framework, which spiraled into the second North Korean nuclear crisis.³⁰ The crisis clearly surfaced, however, with Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly's revelation on October 16, 2002 that North Korean officials had revealed Pyongyang's program to develop highly-enriched uranium. With this news, the United States halted heavy oil shipments under the Korea Energy Development Organization (KEDO, formed under the Agreed Framework). North Korea responded the next month by beginning a series of steps at the Yongbyon nuclear facilities that included removing all seals put in place under the Agreed Framework, dismantling International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) monitoring cameras, and expelling IAEA inspectors. On January 10, 2003, Pyongyang announced its withdrawal from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT). In the weeks that followed, evidence surfaced of the North's tampering with stored fuel rods, restarting its experimental reactor at Yongbyon, and resuming missile tests.³¹

Officials within China's Foreign Ministry proposed talks with North Korean and U.S. negotiators, and Kelly insisted that the United States would not enter into any bilateral discussions with Pyongyang, which is what the North desired.³² Given the U.S. stance on bilateral meetings, representatives from the three countries met briefly in Beijing in mid-April, but came to no conclusion on the issue of DPRK's nuclear weapons program. At this meeting, North Korean negotiators claimed their country already possessed two nuclear weapons and was reprocessing spent fuel, threatened to physically demonstrate these capabilities, and implied

³⁰ Leon Sigal, "Misplaying North Korea and Losing Friends and Influence in Northeast Asia," Social Science Research Council, July 12, 2005; Victor Cha and David C. Kang, "The Debate over North Korea," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 119, No. 2, 2004, pp. 229-254.

³¹ "Reactor Started in North Korea, U.S. Concludes," *New York Times*, February 27, 2003.

³² James Kelly, Testimony before Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington D.C., March 12, 2003 (<http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2003/18661.htm>).

Pyongyang's possible intent to export such weapons.³³ Foreign Ministry officials in Beijing began working behind the scenes to bring the U.S., China, and Japan to the table for a round of four-party talks on the issue. U.S. officials insisted on adding South Korea to the roster at the behest of officials in Seoul, who had felt left out of the negotiations for KEDO, especially as they had footed much of the by-then sunk costs; in turn, North Korea insisted on Russia's inclusion.³⁴ That August, the six-party process began.

At the first round of six-party talks, held between August 27 and 29, 2003, North Korean negotiators pressed for a step-by-step dismantlement process, which would include a formal security guarantee, but U.S. negotiators and President George W. Bush balked, continuing to insist on complete, verified, irreversible dismantlement (CVID) of the North's nuclear programs.³⁵ In addition, though North Korean negotiators urged the U.S. to hold bilateral meetings, which the Chinese negotiators encouraged, U.S. negotiators refused to do so, insisting on a fully multilateral format to reach a solution.³⁶ With these impasses, the Chinese delegation tried to keep things moving by patching together a six-point "memorandum of understanding," in which the six parties agreed to resolve the nuclear issue through peaceful means and dialogue, to take into account the DPRK's security concerns, to explore a plan to resolving the nuclear issue in a simultaneous, incremental manner, to avoid inflammatory words or actions, and to continue the six-party dialogue.³⁷ However, aside from this memorandum, the parties issued no formal agreement at this round.

At the second round of six-party talks, held February 25 to 28, 2004, the parties agreed to form a working group on the issue, with the goal of meeting more frequently than the schedule of the formal talks allowed. However, the North Korean negotiators continued to insist on a step-by-step process with a formal security guarantee, and the U.S. side continued to rebuff their requests, insisting on CVID. The remaining negotiating parties did not endorse the CVID proposal, choosing to postpone hashing out a consensus on how the dismantlement process would unfold. China, the ROK and Russia pledged to provide energy assistance to the DPRK on certain conditions, whereas the U.S. and Japan only "recognized" North Korea's energy needs without any promise of provision. Without an agreement between the six teams, the Chinese delegation

³³ "North Korea Says It now Possess Nuclear Arsenal," *New York Times*, April 25, 2003.

³⁴ Gilbert Rozman, *Strategic Thinking about the Korean Nuclear Crisis* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), p. 193.

³⁵ "North Korea: Where Next for the Nuclear Talks?"

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ "Vice FM Wang Yi, Head of Chinese Delegation to the Six-party Talks, Gives a Press Conference," Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs press release, August 30, 2003.

again drafted and issued a joint statement that essentially reiterated the six-point statement of the last round and continued its positive assessment of the progress of the talks.³⁸

During the third round of six-party talks, held June 23 to 26, 2004, both the U.S. and South Korean delegations brought detailed proposals on denuclearization to the table. The U.S. proposal divided the process into two parts and still largely followed the CVID model, with aid offered further along in the proceedings, whereas the South Korean proposal was more flexible regarding reciprocity and front-loading incentives prior to DPRK actions.³⁹ The parties agreed to employ a step-by-step solution according to a principal vaguely stated as “words for words and action for action.”⁴⁰ Again, the parties did not come to any formal agreements; the Chinese delegation again released a Chairman’s Statement similar to the one in the prior round.

The fourth round of six-party talks unfolded in two phases, broken up by that year’s Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) forum meetings. The first phase of this round, held July 27 to August 6, 2005, came on the heels of the February announcement by the North Korean foreign ministry that the DPRK indeed possessed nuclear weapons and would increase its arsenal in response to U.S. hostility.⁴¹ At the talks, the U.S. negotiating team finally agreed to the repeated requests at the last three rounds by the North Korean and Chinese teams that the U.S. team hold bilateral discussions with its DPRK counterparts. However, the talks hit a major snag when the U.S. team refused to accept a light-water reactor energy program in North Korea, even as the other four negotiating parties agreed in principle. U.S. negotiators eventually acquiesced to a compromise in which they would consider such a proposal following the North’s accomplishment of CVID, rejoining of the NPT, and restoration of IAEA safeguards.⁴²

At the second phase of the fourth round, held September 13 to 19, 2005, the parties agreed upon a Joint Statement that reaffirmed much of the language of the previous closing statements, with two important additions. First, the U.S. side agreed it would provide a formal security guarantee to North Korea. Second, all parties agreed to discuss the light-water reactor program for the DPRK “at an appropriate time.”⁴³ It seemed that U.S. negotiators had moved to a

³⁸ “Three Features and Five Advancements,” Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs press release, February 28, 2004.

³⁹ James Kelly “Dealing With North Korea’s Nuclear Programs,” July 15, 2004 (<http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2004/34395.htm>); “North Korea: Where Next for the Nuclear Talks?”

⁴⁰ “New Consensus and New Steps,” Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 26, 2004.

⁴¹ “DPRK FM on Its Stand to Suspend Its Participation in Six-party Talks for Indefinite Period,” *Korean Central News Agency*, February 10, 2005.

⁴² “After North Korea’s Missile Launch: Are the Nuclear Talks Dead?” International Crisis Group, August 9, 2006.

⁴³ “Full Text of Six-party Talks Joint Statement,” September 19, 2005 (http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-09/19/content_479150.htm).

compromise with the other five parties on the peaceful nuclear energy issue; however, in his closing statement, chief U.S. negotiator Christopher Hill made it clear that an “appropriate time” was indeed following CVID, and also announced it was formally ending KEDO, the previous, suspended light-water reactor program in North Korea.⁴⁴ At the same time this round of talks unfolded, the U.S. Treasury Department threatened sanctions on a Macao bank dealing in suspicious North Korean funds, resulting in the bank’s freezing the money.⁴⁵

The fifth round of talks unfolded in three phases. The first, from November 9 to 11, 2005, produced nothing substantive, with chief North Korean negotiator Kim Gye-gwan telling Hill that the U.S. sanctions were of hostile intent, and both sides unwilling to move any further on other issues.⁴⁶ Chinese delegates once again drafted a Chairman’s Statement, though noticeably thin and with no new additions.⁴⁷ This round was cut short by that year’s Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meetings.

The second phase of the fifth round, held December 18-22, 2006, was more than a year in coming, with North Korean officials refusing to return to the table due to the U.S. sanctions on the DPRK’s funds in Macao, during which time the North conducted tests of a salvo of missiles as well as a nuclear device. This phase was largely devoted to bilateral discussions regarding the frozen North Korean accounts. The talks went into “recess” due to a lack of consensus on the sanctions issue.⁴⁸

The third phase of the fifth round, held February 8-13, 2007, yielded a Joint Statement known in the media as the February 13 Agreement. Under it, North Korea is committed to shutting down and sealing its facilities at Yongbyon and submitting them to IAEA inspection. The DPRK also must declare its remaining nuclear programs and establish working groups on denuclearization, energy resources, and regional security, as well as initiate working groups and bilateral talks on DPRK-U.S. and DPRK-Japan normalization. In turn, the United States will begin the process of removing the designation of the DPRK as a state sponsor of terrorism and terminating the application of the Trading with the Enemy Act with respect to the DPRK.

The North agreed to complete all of the above requirements within 60 days of the declaration in exchange for 50,000 tons of heavy fuel oil or its equivalent. Following

⁴⁴ Christopher Hill, “Closing Plenary of the Fourth Round of the Six-party Talks, U.S. Department of State, September 18, 2005 (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2005/53499.htm>).

⁴⁵ Dianne E. Rennack, “North Korea: Economic Sanctions,” CRS Report for Congress, October 17, 2006.

⁴⁶ “After North Korea’s Missile Launch: Are the Nuclear Talks Dead?”

⁴⁷ “Full Text of Chairman’s Statement,” Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 22, 2006.

⁴⁸ “DPRK, U.S. meet on nuke, financial issues as six-party talks enter 2nd day,” Xinhua, December 20, 2006; “6-party talks could start as early as this month: sources,” Hankyoreh Sinmun, January 10, 2007.

Pyongyang's complete declaration of its nuclear programs and disablement of all existing nuclear facilities, including the graphite-moderated reactors and reprocessing plants, the other parties will provide an additional 950,000 tons of heavy fuel oil or its equivalent.⁴⁹

Noticeably, the agreement makes no provision for the North's requested peaceful nuclear program. In addition, Japan and the United States disagree with the tenets of the agreement, even as they both signed it. Japan declared it would not contribute to provision of the fuel aid until the issue of its citizens abducted by North Korea in the 1970s and 1980s was resolved. The United States responded that it was still adamant on CVID and would not provide aid, either, until North Korea accomplished full denuclearization.⁵⁰

The sixth round, ongoing as of this writing, has so far consisted of two phases. The first part of the first phase, held March 19 to 22, 2007, was marked by Assistant Secretary Hill's announcement that all of the frozen funds were released. However, North Korean negotiators boycotted the meetings after the first day because the funds were not readily available due to the Bank of China's reluctance to touch money from the bank, which the U.S. Treasury Department still had on its blacklist.⁵¹ The remaining parties were forced to call a recess.

The second part of the first phase, held July 18 to 20, 2007, saw the North Korean delegation return to the negotiating table after a Russian bank agreed in June to transfer the now-unfrozen but still contested North Korean funds from Macao to a North Korean bank.⁵² In addition, the day the talks began, IAEA inspectors verified that North Korea had indeed closed its Yongbyon facilities per the February 13 agreement.⁵³ The parties issued a Joint Statement that delineated steps toward fulfilling the February 13, 2007 agreement.⁵⁴ Japan continued its refusal to provide energy aid until the abductions issue is resolved, and the U.S. continued its refusal to provide energy aid until North Korea accomplished U.S. requirements for CVID.

The second phase of the sixth round, held September 27 to 30, 2007, produced a list of second-phase actions toward completing the February 13, 2007 agreement, including normalization efforts promised by U.S. negotiators, such as removing the U.S. State Department designation of North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism and ceasing application of the Trading

⁴⁹ "Initial Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement," Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 13, 2007.

⁵⁰ "South Korea and Japan Split on North Korea Pact," *The New York Times*, February 15, 2007.

⁵¹ "6-party talks on North Korea are stalled," *International Herald-Tribune*, March 20, 2007.

⁵² "Russia Agrees To Help North Korea Banking Row," *Agence France-Presse*, June 11, 2007.

⁵³ "U.N. verifies closure of North Korean nuclear facilities," CNN, July 18, 2007.

⁵⁴ "Press Communique of the Six-party Talks," July 7, 2007 (http://www.chinadaily.net/world/2007-07/20/content_5440408.htm).

with the Enemy Act on North Korean accounts and companies.⁵⁵

As of this writing, the talks continue, though with no new round officially scheduled and with U.S. and DPRK policymakers continuing their debate over the pace and scope of North Korea's obligations.

The following chart summarizes major coordination successes and impasses throughout the talks.

Tracking Coordination during the Six-party Process:

| Six-party Round | Coordination Successes | Coordination Breakdowns |
|---|--|---|
| 1st Round (August 27-29, 2003) | (no substantive event) | (no substantive event) |
| 2nd Round (February 25-28, 2004) | (no substantive event) | Other parties disagree with United States regarding denuclearization process; Russia, China, and South Korea cannot agree with United States and Japan on energy provision to North Korea |
| 3rd Round (June 23-26, 2004) | (no substantive event) | (Other parties continue to disagree with United States regarding denuclearization process) |
| 4th Round, 1st Phase (July 26-August 7, 2005) | (no substantive event) | Japan, South Korea, Russia, and China agree on peaceful nuclear energy for North Korea; U.S. disagrees |
| 4th Round, 2nd Phase (September 13-19, 2005) | Joint Statement | United States post-round unilateral "clarification" of several items on Joint Statement pushes its stance away from the other negotiators; U.S. sanctions on DPRK funds made public |
| 5th Round, 1st Phase (November 9-11, 2005) | No substantive event at talks; Between Rounds: Successful negotiation of draft for UNSC resolutions 1695 (July 15, 2006) and 1718 (October 14, 2006) | Post-meeting breakdown of talks due to North Korea's reaction to U.S. sanctions |

⁵⁵ "Second-Phase Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan Web site, October 3, 2007 (http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/n_korea/6party/action0710.html).

| | | |
|--|------------------------|---|
| 5th Round, 2nd Phase (December 18-22, 2006) | (no substantive event) | Talks forced into “recess” due to continued disagreement on issue of U.S. sanctions |
| 5th Round, 3rd Phase (February 8-13, 2007) | Joint Agreement | United States refuses to provide fuel aid until CVID; Japan refuses to provide fuel aid until satisfactory resolution of kidnapping issue; other three parties agree to provide fuel aid on a step-by-step basis |
| 6th Round, 1st Phase, Part 1 (March 19-22, 2007) | (no substantive event) | NK boycotts due to U.S. sanctions. No fuel from United States or Japan. |
| 6th Round, 1st Phase, Part 2 (July 18-20, 2007) | (no substantive event) | (Continued refusal by United States and Japan to provide fuel aid) |
| 6th Round, 2nd Phase (September 27-30, 2007) | (no substantive event) | (Continued refusal by United States and Japan to provide fuel aid) |

As the divergence in issues and strategy within the negotiations suggest, coordination among the five parties has been a scarce commodity. While the six-party process is not based on negotiators taking a wholly unified approach at all times, it is clear from the above summary of events that negotiators’ failure to agree on certain principles and strategies has been behind the major stalemates and breakdowns in discussion.

In order to understand these differences, I first look at what scholars have had to say about the drivers of strategy toward the North Korea nuclear issue at the six-party talks. As the next section tells us, existing studies do not adequately explain why these countries have come to endorse these divergent strategies.

IV. Literature Review

Literature on the six-party talks adequately identifies the disagreements between negotiating teams throughout the process, but still leaves several major stones unturned – namely, what is driving the strategy of certain states and the officials within them. This shortcoming is related to two factors: first, the analytical lenses scholars have employed are largely limited to realist ones; second, most studies compare only the approaches of two given countries, offering an incomplete picture of the myriad dynamics at hand.

The largest group of literature focuses on which policies the parties should attempt to implement at the talks. Nearly all of these debates focus solely on what the best strategy would be for U.S. negotiators, ignoring the need to coordinate strategy among the other four parties.⁵⁶ This singular focus on what Washington should be doing too readily takes the primacy of the U.S. strategy as a given. This fails to address the fact that the multilateral format requires consensus on strategy among the five states negotiating with North Korea, in order to effectively move the discussion along and find coordination, whether the agreed strategy encompasses pressure or engagement.⁵⁷

What all scholars pay scant attention to is the ‘why’ – *why* negotiations at the talks have been marked by repeated lack of coordination. Studies that take a comparative approach move more in this direction and offer more depth in their scope of analysis. These studies examine the strategies chosen by two or more states within the six-party group and compare these tactics with one another, in order to ascertain what is driving decision-making.

Within this group of studies, Kang (2005) compares the approaches of the United States

⁵⁶ See, for example, Joel S. Wit, “Enhancing U.S. Engagement with North Korea”; Michael Horowitz, “Who’s Behind That Curtain? Unveiling Potential Leverage over Pyongyang,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Winter 2004; Mitchell Reiss, “A Nuclear-armed North Korea: Accepting the ‘Unacceptable?’ ” *Survival*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (Winter 2006/07), pp. 97-110; Cha and Kang, *Nuclear North Korea*; Victor Cha and David C. Kang, “The Debate over North Korea,” pp. 235-38; Victor Cha and David Kang, “Can North Korea Be Engaged?” *Survival*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Summer 2004), pp. 89-108, Victor Cha, “Winning Asia: Washington’s Untold Success Story,” *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 2007).

⁵⁷ Several scholars do take into account the deleterious effects of this frequent lack of coordination. Schoff (2006) sees the six-party players as having not enough clarity on application of incentives or removal of disincentives, thus stymieing efforts to come to a solution. Rozman (2007) acknowledges that South Korea’s refusal to offer anything but incentives to the North means that there exist no multilateral red lines at the six-party proceedings. See James L. Schoff, “Political Fences and Bad Neighbors: North Korea Policymaking in Japan and Implications for the United States” (Cambridge: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, June 2006); Gilbert Rozman, “Turning the Six-party Talks into a Multilateral Security Framework for Northeast Asia,” in *Towards Sustainable Economic and Security Relation in East Asia: U.S. and ROK Policy Options* (Washington: Korea Economic Institute, 2007).

and Japan.⁵⁸ He warns that Washington risks confusing Tokyo's embrace of sanctions as a sign of their commitment to the U.S.-Japan alliance and not what the sanctions are truly linked to: a drive to resolve the kidnapping issue. Tokyo's policies toward the DPRK have sought to avoid binding Japan to follow the U.S. position, while domestic politics have forced the abduction issue to the fore, Kang writes. Once that issue is resolved, he concludes, Japan will be far less likely to pressure North Korea and may return to its original engagement policy. Yet Kang does not delve into why Japan might allow domestic factors to come to bear on its six-party strategy, nor why it had at first practiced an engagement policy with the North under Koizumi despite increased threats, shifting suddenly to a hard-line tack when it pushed the kidnapping issue to the fore. In addition, by limiting his comparison to only two countries, Kang narrows his scope of analysis.

Several scholars provide a comparison between the tactics Chinese and U.S. negotiators have brought to the six-party negotiating table. Most are content to examine China's actions at the talks through a realist lens. Kim (2006) writes that the United States mistakenly assumed China's goal at the talks to also be preventing a nuclear North, when in fact stability on the peninsula and in the region are its primary concerns.⁵⁹ Snyder and Wit (2007) reaffirm Kim's claim that China primarily seeks not North Korean denuclearization but rather maintenance of stability on its periphery, as well as to maintain influence and ability to shape events on the peninsula in ways favorable to Beijing's strategic interests, which may bring Beijing into conflict with Washington.⁶⁰ Wu (2005) writes that due to security concerns stemming from the North Korea issue – namely, the fear of refugees or regional military conflict – the “lips and teeth” relationship between North Korea and China is “both obsolete and self-destructive” to the latter.⁶¹ Moore (2008) looks at the China-U.S. comparison through the contradiction between China's willingness to sanction North Korea for its nuclear activity and Beijing's continued aid flow to Pyongyang, concluding that China sees this “two-pronged policy” as the best way to retain regional stability and keep North Korea from threatening China's economic and security interests.⁶²

Where touched upon, ideational factors, such as ideological considerations or historical

⁵⁸ David C. Kang, “Japan: U.S. Partner or Focused on Abductees?” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 4, Autumn 2005, pp. 107-117.

⁵⁹ Samuel S. Kim, *The Two Koreas and the Great Powers* (New York: Cambridge, 2006).

⁶⁰ Snyder and Wit, “Chinese Views: Breaking the Stalemate on the Korean Peninsula” (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, February 2007).

⁶¹ Anne Wu, “What China Whispers to North Korea,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 2, Spring 2005.

⁶² Gregory J. Moore, “How North Korea Threatens China's Interests: Understanding Chinese ‘Duplicity’ on the North Korean Nuclear Issue,” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (2008), pp. 1-29.

legacy, are quickly dismissed as epiphenomenal. Wu finds China has altered its diplomatic philosophy greatly since the Korean War, and in recent years has been orienting its foreign policy to serve domestic priorities. Moore writes that any ideological ties between the two nations have been replaced by a drive for regional economic integration on Beijing's part, and that Beijing has not trusted North Korea for decades. He concludes that The United States thus risks overestimating China's ties to and interest in North Korea outside of its own strategic calculations.

In contrast to these prior China-U.S. studies, Glaser and Liang (2008) look beyond realism, comparing Chinese and U.S. strategy.⁶³ They write that China was initially reluctant to get involved in any negotiations on the North Korea nuclear issue, preferring to let Washington and Pyongyang hash it out. This reluctance, according to the authors, stemmed not only from uncertainty as to the verity of Washington's accusations toward the North, but also from the fact that China's assuming an active diplomatic role would be counter to the enduring guideline of Deng Xiaoping to assume a low profile in the international arena.

In general, however, the analyses of Chinese strategy rely too heavily upon a strictly realist lens, without exploring other potential explanatory factors. In addition, these analyses, by being self-limited to comparisons of Chinese and U.S. strategy, ensure their analytical scope is narrow, as in the previously discussed United States-Japan comparisons.

Two studies by Snyder (2005, 2006), while engaging a range of conceptual approaches, suffer from the same narrow scope.⁶⁴ The two studies provide a similar comparison of U.S. and South Korean strategies at the talks. Snyder sees Seoul trapped between a zero-sum alliance with the Washington and the desire to play a role in policy toward Pyongyang, a desire that has led South Korean policymakers to choose engagement and economic aid with the DPRK, seeing the United States as a "distracted superpower ally with differing global priorities." He argues that South Korean citizens and policymakers fear entrapment in a military conflict precipitated by U.S. unwillingness to be flexible toward North Korea. Additionally, South Koreans see the North's threat as deriving from its weakness, not its material capabilities; therefore, Seoul is reluctant to move from economic cooperation because it sees economic ties as an insurance clause against North Korean collapse.

⁶³ Bonnie Glaser and Wang Liang, "North Korea: The Beginning of a China-U.S. Partnership?" *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 31 No. 3, Summer 2008, pp. 168-70

⁶⁴ Scott Snyder, "South Korea's Squeeze Play," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 4, Autumn 2005, pp. 93-106; Snyder, "A Comparison of U.S. and South Korean National Security Strategies: Implications for Alliance Coordination Toward North Korea," in Philip Yun and Gi-wook Shin, eds., *North Korea: 2005 and Beyond*.

Snyder also posits that contradictions between the national security strategy of the United States and South Korea, respectively, have spilled over into the six-party talks, where it has been difficult to coordinate tactical approaches between the United States and the ROK. According to Snyder, the United States is trying to shut out any peer competitors in the region, whereas South Korea seeks the right institutional frameworks and structures to lead to economic growth for the region. Snyder identifies two seemingly contradictory concepts South Korea concurrently possesses: the development of self-reliance in the security realm, and dependence on the alliance with the United States to deter any North Korean provocation. Snyder names South Korea's burgeoning nationalism as root of this contradiction, bringing in the explanatory factor of national identity.

While Snyder's analysis diverges from the dominant realist-based analyses, Snyder, like Kang, does not provide a fully convincing argument as to why domestic factors would be allowed to dominate South Korea's strategic calculus at the six-party talks, given that the South until very recently viewed the North as its biggest threat, and given that the security situation has since diminished on the peninsula. Also, much like Kang's dyadic comparison of U.S. and Japanese strategy and the comparisons of China-U.S. strategy reviewed above, Snyder's studies, confined as they are to comparisons of U.S. and South Korean strategy, are limited in terms of their ability to provide a thorough analysis of the factors at play within the six-party process.

Indeed, very few studies provide a look at the tactics all of the negotiating parties bring to the table. Rozman (2007) attempts to do so by describing the five Asian nations' strategic choices during the six-party process, basing his analysis on the parties' regional historical legacies.⁶⁵ However, he does not clearly identify or delineate his explanatory variables, resulting in a study more anecdotal than illuminative. Snyder (2007) looks at the varied reactions of the five parties negotiating with North Korea to its October 9, 2006 nuclear test. However, his analysis suffers from being limited to pivoting upon the immediate reactions following the test itself, rather than offering an expanded analysis of strategies employed by the parties throughout the duration of the talks. Thus, his study is merely informational rather than explanatory.

Park (2005) offers the most comprehensive analysis thus far of the six-party talks.⁶⁶ Taking a look at all six states involved, he offers three propositions for explaining why strategies have been so divergent; namely, the parties' domestic policy constraints, differing priorities, and separate historical analogies for how denuclearization should be executed have hampered efforts

⁶⁵ Gilbert Rozman, *Strategic Thinking about the Korean Nuclear Crisis*.

⁶⁶ John S. Park, "Inside Multilateralism: The Six-party Talks," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol 28, No. 4, Autumn 2005.

to come to a consensus on strategy. Park does an excellent job of identifying and comparing the varying interests each party brings to the talks, as well as their prioritization of the importance of four related issues – nuclear proliferation, North Korean refugees, ballistic missiles, and Korean reunification. In addition, several of the concepts and variables also chart fresh explanatory terrain by delving into areas outside the scope of realism, such as his look at domestic political constraints and historical analogy. However, Park does not delve further into an explanation of how each country's negotiators arrived at their particular stance, and as such his analysis functions as a comprehensive audit of state interests at the talks, offering nothing further toward an understanding of what is driving these strategies.

These accounts begin to address *how* the six parties have had trouble coordinating policies and strategies. What the existing literature lacks in are adequate explanations as to *why* states would make particular strategic choices. As such, several questions remain insufficiently addressed. First, why would a rise in aggressive signaling on the part of North Korea result in Japan's increasingly pursuing its own domestic interests within the six-party talks, rather than strengthening its approach by increasing coordination with its military ally, the United States? The literature details Japan's hard push for a resolution to the kidnapping issue, but leaves unexplained why this would so suddenly have become such a large and unavoidable concern for policymakers, especially just after Koizumi had employed an engagement strategy in the years leading up to the six-party talks. Given the existing threat, why is South Korea so intent on engaging the North, especially in terms of economic incentives and food and energy aid that many experts say are being partly diverted to its military? This is especially puzzling given that the security environment has largely changed for the worse, with continued belligerent rhetoric from North Korea coupled with increased military buildup and nuclear weapons development, and when a little over a decade prior, the DPRK was considered a mortal enemy. What are Russia's ambitions vis-à-vis the six-party talks? Just how much is the increased rivalry between the China and the United States playing itself out at the six-party proceedings?

In addition, the analytical lenses through which scholars have peered onto the six-party talks require further development: for example, existing accounts (especially those on Chinese strategy) rely too heavily upon realism-based analysis without exploring the potential power of other explanatory factors. Finally, as many of the studies are confined to two-country comparisons, they are limited in terms of their ability to provide a thorough analysis of the full range of factors at play within the six-party process. All of these leave the larger question

unexplained – why five states faced with the same grave security threat would choose such a wide range of different strategies.

In order to address these puzzles, I will now enter into the main argument, providing a country-by-country process trace of six-party strategy, and then applying my three analytical lenses in order to ascertain which variable or variables – realist concerns, domestic political institutions, and national identity – offer the most thorough explanation of the drivers at work in strategy seen at the six-party talks. Based on the findings of my case studies, I will then accept or reject the hypothesis for a particular country. Finally, I will offer a possible explanation for the explanatory primacy of the strongest variable or variables for each country's strategy.

V. The Five States at the Negotiating Table with North Korea

1. China

a. Strategic Approaches within the Six-party Process

Despite North Korea's continued increase in its offensive capabilities throughout the six-party process, Chinese negotiators have largely employed a strategy of engagement with North Korea, with only a few mild pressure tactics used selectively. Negotiators' main red and green lines seem related not as much to North Korea's nuclear threat than to a desire within the Chinese Foreign Ministry to have Pyongyang listen to its requests.

Initially, Foreign Ministry officials preferred noninvolvement in the diplomatic process surrounding the second North Korea nuclear crisis, wanting the issue to be solved bilaterally, as it assumed North was developing nuclear weapons primarily as a bargaining chip to be used with the United States.⁶⁷ Beijing also did not trust Washington's intentions, and feared that it was jockeying for regime change and wanted no part of endorsing such a plan.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ James L. Schoff, "Political Fences and Bad Neighbors: North Korea Policymaking in Japan and Implications for the United States."

⁶⁸ Bonnie Glaser and Wang Liang, "North Korea: The Beginning of a China-U.S. Partnership?" *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Summer 2008), pp. 165-180.

Chinese foreign policymakers began to change their mind with North Korea's provocative actions in early 2003, including restarting the reactor at Yongbyon, withdrawing from the NPT and expelling IAEA inspectors. China voted for the February 12, 2003 IAEA resolution that stated that North Korea had violated the NPT and referred the issue to the UN Security Council. Several days later, on February 18, in a discussion held in Beijing, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi warned North Korean Foreign Minister Park Nam-sun not to cross the red line the United States set by restarting plutonium reprocessing or long-range missile tests, warning also that any renewed provocation would also harm North Korea's relations with the PRC.⁶⁹ In March 2003, the oil pipeline from the Daqing oil field in northeastern China to North Korea was shut down for three days, just after North Korea test-fired a missile that landed in waters between South Korea and Japan, and during the time in which the Chinese Foreign Ministry was pressuring its counterpart in Pyongyang to come to the then three-party negotiating table. China has officially deemed the shutdown as due to technical maintenance, but analysts note the significance of the timing and the silence from Beijing on the matter.⁷⁰

In the same time period, Beijing strongly ratcheted up diplomacy, sending several high-level officials to meet with Kim Jong-il and other top North Korean officials to urge for the trilateral meetings and then the six-party format. By April 2003, Beijing officials had met with their Pyongyang counterparts leaders 60 times and transmitted more than 50 messages between the United States and North Korea regarding the nuclear issue.⁷¹

During the first round of six-party talks, the Chinese Foreign Ministry's role as intermediary blossomed: it urged the United States to hold bilateral negotiations with North Korea, and used shuttle diplomacy to keep the North in the talks.⁷² Throughout the talks, whenever discussion hit a snag, Chinese officials worked behind the scenes with their counterparts in North Korea, the other six-party members, and other nations such as Australia and the UK to try to either persuade Pyongyang to return to the talks or convince the United States to engage in bilateral negotiations. At the same time, throughout the duration of the talks, China also repeatedly made efforts to distance itself from the U.S. stance. Four days after the first round closed, China's ambassador to the talks Wang Yi told reporters in Manila that U.S. policy toward North Korea was the main problem the talks were facing.⁷³ In May 2005, after the United States

⁶⁹ Ming Liu, "China and the North Korea Crisis: Facing Test and Transition," *Pacific Affairs*. Vol. 76, No. 3 (Fall 2003) p. 347.

⁷⁰ "North Korea: Where Next for the Nuclear Talks?"

⁷¹ Ming Liu, "China and the North Korea Crisis: Facing Test and Transition," pp. 358-360.

⁷² Bonnie Glaser and Carola McGiffert, "China: Tactical Bandwagoning, Strategic Balancing."

⁷³ "Chinese Aide Says U.S. Is Obstacle in Korean Talks," *The New York Times*, September 2, 2003.

had once again pressed China to push harder on North Korea in an attempt to gain a capitulation from Pyongyang, Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao rejected linking “normal trade” between China and North Korea to the nuclear issue, saying that Beijing opposed “trying to address the problem through strong-arm tactics.”⁷⁴

During the fourth round, Chinese negotiators once again drafted the closing document and made clear to United States negotiators that if it refused to sign, it would have to bear responsibility for the breakdown of the talks, thus paving the way for the September 19, 2005 Joint Statement.⁷⁵ President Hu Jintao took a three-day state visit to North Korea on October 28–30, 2005. According to the China Daily, Kim Jong Il stated in talks with President Hu that “the DPRK would honor its commitment and attend the fifth round” of the Six-Party talks. At this time, Hu offered Kim a new package of aid and investment. This visit was reciprocated when Kim Jong Il toured development projects in several of China’s provinces and then held talks in Beijing in January 2006.

However, Chinese negotiators and officials in Beijing have not been opposed to applying pressure on North Korea on practical matters such as issues of economic reform and times when Pyongyang opposed Beijing’s requests outright. For example, when the U.S. Treasury Department publicly announced Macau-based Banco Delta Asia’s ties to nearly \$25 million in allegedly illicit North Korean funds, the Bank of China moved to freeze its own North Korean funds. Also, Beijing strongly condemned the North’s missile test on July 4, 2006, as prior to the test, Premier Wen Jiabao had urged Pyongyang to abandon its test plans. However, Chinese negotiators at the talks requested, along with their Russian counterparts, that the Japanese negotiators’ UNSC draft be edited to remove referral to U.N. Charter chapter VII, which would introduce the possibility of the use of force. Still, this marked China’s first signature on a full UNSC Resolution against DPRK practices. Chinese officials, at the United States’ behest, also reportedly warned officials in Pyongyang just prior to its nuclear test not to go through with it; senior Chinese leadership reportedly took U.S. concerns seriously and conveyed both Washington’s and Beijing’s concerns and “red lines” to the North, and China may have even cut off oil supplies in September under heavy test preparation rumors.⁷⁶ In the week leading up to the nuclear test, in comments marking a strong departure from the usual avoidance of direct criticism of Pyongyang, Chinese ambassador to the UN Wang Guangya said, “No one is going to protect”

⁷⁴ “China Rules Out Using Sanctions on North Korea,” *The New York Times*, May 11, 2005.

⁷⁵ Bonnie Glaser and Carola McGiffert; “China: Tactical Bandwagoning, Strategic Balancing.”

⁷⁶ Scott Snyder, “Responses to North Korea’s Nuclear Test: Capitulation or Collective Action?”; Gregory J. Moore, “How North Korea Threatens China’s Interests: Understanding Chinese ‘Duplicity’ on the North Korean Nuclear Issue.”

North Korea if it goes ahead with “bad behavior...I think if North Koreans do have the nuclear test, I think that they have to realize that they will face serious consequences.”⁷⁷ A few days before the test, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao predicted it would not take place.⁷⁸

When North Korea went ahead with the test on October 6, 2006, China’s Foreign Ministry publicly called it “brazen” (*hanran*), a word normally reserved for actions China seeks to strongly condemn. But when it was clear that another UNSC resolution would be drawn up, Ambassador Guangya turned aside questions regarding whether China would now support a sanctions resolution.⁷⁹ During the drafting process, Chinese negotiators insisted that the United States negotiators’ proposed version, which included requirement to inspect cargo going in and out of the North, be diluted to say that countries would be requested, and not required, to do so. Chinese negotiators said they would not participate in any searches of North Korean cargo, and after the resolution passed indicated that it would not restrict their normal economic activities with Pyongyang.⁸⁰ China temporarily froze financial transactions and bilateral economic cooperation, but did not cut off the ubiquitous energy and food lines to the North.

Nonetheless, the subsequent UNSC vote marked the first time China was willing to impose official trade and travel sanctions on North Korea. A senior Foreign Ministry official privately admitted that the Chinese reliance on persuasion and incentives to gain North Korea’s cooperation had proven a failed policy.⁸¹ When the six parties signed onto the February 13, 2007 agreement, Christopher Hill personally credited Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei with bridging the disagreement between Washington and Pyongyang.⁸²

Throughout the six-party process, China has provided, by multiple estimates, 70 to 90 percent of North Korea’s annual energy supplies, roughly 30 percent of its total outside assistance, 38 percent of its imports, and one-third of its food imports, totaling up to 1 billion annually in direct financial support.⁸³

Strategy: Throughout the talks, Chinese negotiators and officials have employed a continual stream of incentives, essentially propping up the North Korean regime with food and

⁷⁷ “Lips and Teeth: North Korea-China Ties Strained by Nuclear Test Vow,” *The Associated Press*, October 8, 2006.

⁷⁸ Mitchell Reiss, “A Nuclear-armed North Korea: Accepting the ‘Unacceptable?’ ”

⁷⁹ “Bush Rebukes North Korea; U.S. Seeks New U.N. Sanctions,” *The New York Times*, October 10, 2006.

⁸⁰ “For China, Test Comes as a Diplomatic Affront,” *The New York Times*, October 17, 2006.

⁸¹ Bonnie Glaser and Carola McGiffert, “China: Tactical Bandwagoning, Strategic Balancing.”

⁸² CSIS Briefing, Washington, February 23, 2007.

⁸³ Victor Cha and David Kang, “Think Again: The North Korea Crisis,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2003; Anne Wu, “What China Whispers to North Korea;” Michael Horowitz, “Who’s Behind That Curtain? Unveiling Potential Leverage over Pyongyang.”

fuel aid, along with encouraging economic cooperation. Though Beijing has been willing to use occasional pressure tactics, it has only used such strategies for very brief durations. The shift by central decision-makers in Beijing toward a willingness to sign onto international sanctions in the form of the two UNSC resolutions is quite unprecedented; however, the Chinese negotiators (along with their Russian counterparts) made certain that these texts did not sanction the use of force nor make imperative certain searches. Of the two red lines set up by Chinese negotiators and officials in Beijing, the prohibition of North Korea's going nuclear seems tenuous at best in the face of its overall strategy of engagement, suggesting perhaps that a nuclear-armed North is less of a security concern to Chinese strategists than it may be to other nations in the talks. When negotiators employed pressure tactics, it was due to North Korea's crossing of the second red line: defiance of official requests made to the Pyongyang government by Beijing.

| Approaches/ Strategems | Red Line(s) | Green Line(s) | Incentives and Pressure Tactics |
|--|--|---|---|
| 1st – Organizer from sidelines; unwilling to endorse sanctions; primary source of DPRK aid 2nd – Active participant; willing to endorse sanctions; primary source of DPRK aid | Throughout: DPRK establishing status as nuclear state; open DPRK defiance of China's requests and interests | Throughout: Following China's requests and interests | Sticks: Cutoff of oil shipments, bank transactions Carrots: Oil and food aid; economic cooperation (both constant) |

b. Analysis of State Approach

In analyzing China's 'six-party strategy,' realist concerns hold strong explanatory power. However, these concerns are more closely related to China's aim to maintain its regional rise than to the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear weapons. In addition, while the centralized nature of international policymaking means that domestic political institutions do not factor heavily in explaining China's strategic choices at the negotiating table, national identity offers some explanatory power through China's increased tendency toward diplomacy and its centuries-long historical memory as the regional hegemon.

i. Realist Concerns

While Beijing faces tangible security concerns vis-à-vis the North's nuclear program, Chinese strategy at the six-party negotiations suggests a realist calculation based less on balancing against the North Korea threat and blocking its economic gain and more on balancing against U.S. and Japanese dominance and assertion in the region.

North Korea's nuclear aspirations do indeed present strong security concerns for China. China does not want a regional nuclear arms race, nor a renewed conventional arms race, and it certainly does not want either race to reach Taiwan, with which it still desires reunification.⁸⁴ Another related and equally undesired scenario would involve a nuclear armed and belligerent North Korea reinvigorating regional alliances, causing Taiwan to move closer to Japan and the United States and eventually receive their permission to participate in their missile defense system.⁸⁵ China also does not want to have to choose sides should tensions escalate into military action on the North Korea nuclear issue. Indeed, based on these threats, China has consistently pronounced its discontent with North Korea's development of a nuclear weapons program throughout the six-party talks.

However, China has practiced neither external nor internal balancing against the rising North Korean threat through six-party strategy. China has also not shown its concern about relative economic gain by limiting economic engagement with North Korea, the predicted response to a threat under realist terms. In fact, some analysts have concluded that China's ubiquitous oil shipments to North Korea indeed may be being used for military purposes by Pyongyang.⁸⁶ This would suggest a China less afraid of the North Korean military threat than an initial observation of the change in balance of material capabilities would suggest.

Indeed, more than keeping North Korea nuclear-free, China's registered strategy shifts in the six-party talks seem related to another realist calculation – China's own ambitions as a rising power.⁸⁷ China has not been secretive about its intentions to be a powerful state, with economic might and military buildup part and parcel to this plan.⁸⁸ Looking at its negotiators' stances

⁸⁴ Gregory J. Moore, "How North Korea Threatens China's Interests: Understanding Chinese 'Duplicity' on the North Korean Nuclear Issue," pp. 23-24.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Jaewoo Choo, "Mirroring North Korea's Growing Economic Dependence on China," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (April 2008), pp. 343-372.

⁸⁷ David Shambaugh, "China and the Korean Peninsula: Playing for the Long Term," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Spring 2003), pp. 43-56.

⁸⁸ Bonnie Glaser and Carola McGiffert, "China: Tactical Bandwagoning, Strategic Balancing," in Daniel Benjamin, ed., *America and the World in the Age of Terror: A New Landscape in International Relationship* (Washington: CSIS Press, 2005), pp. 2-6; Evan S. Medeiros, "Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-Pacific Stability," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Winter 2005-06), pp. 145-159.

during the six-party talks, Beijing's first shift in strategy – moving from indifference to a more active role in the multilateral process – is related to the fact that Beijing realized it could leverage a substantial role in the negotiations in order to keep U.S. regional primacy in check, and perhaps to balance against Japan's interests, as well, as these two countries offer the greatest challenge to China's rise.⁸⁹ Indeed, China's second shift in strategy at the talks – allowing for and participating in sanctions against the Pyongyang regime – came after North Korea's defiance of China's requests to not test missiles and a nuclear device, acts which led China to assert its influence and attempt to 'put North Korea in its place.' This is part and parcel to China's growing emphasis on great-power relations (*daguo guanxi*) as a top foreign policy priority.⁹⁰ Indeed, in the eyes of Beijing's policymakers, the North Korean nuclear problem is perhaps "merely a proliferation issue," if that.⁹¹

In addition, China's engagement strategy and continued aid to the North seem linked to Beijing's desire to protect its country's economic growth from damage, either through a U.S. military confrontation of the North or a North Korean collapse.⁹² Military action or reunification could eliminate North Korea as a strategic buffer against U.S. military presence, bringing U.S. troops up to the Chinese border. Either scenario would bring regional destabilization and a flood of refugees. Over 34 percent of China's total trade in 2006 involved the United States, Japan, and South Korea – countries that would be involved in any military conflict on the Korean peninsula.⁹³ This drive to sustain economic growth seems to stem not from an attempt to counter North Korea's rise in capabilities, but rather to balance against the U.S. and Japan.

In sum, China's strategy during the six-party process is indeed strongly linked to realist concerns, though having less to do with the immediate material threat of a nuclear North Korea and more to do with China's desire to continue its economic and political rise in the region, unencumbered by U.S. and Japanese attempts at balancing against it.

⁸⁹ Gregory J. Moore, "How North Korea Threatens China's Interests: Understanding Chinese 'Duplicity' on the North Korean Nuclear Issue," pp. 21-24.

⁹⁰ Evan S. Medeiros and M. Taylor Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 6 (November/December 2003).

⁹¹ Jaewoo Choo, "Mirroring North Korea's Growing Economic Dependence on China," p. 355.

⁹² Gregory J. Moore, "How North Korea Threatens China's Interests: Understanding Chinese 'Duplicity' on the North Korean Nuclear Issue," pp. 19-23.

⁹³ U.S.-China Business Council, quoted in Gregory J. Moore, "How North Korea Threatens China's Interests: Understanding Chinese 'Duplicity' on the North Korean Nuclear Issue," p. 19.

ii. Domestic Political Institutions

In looking at China's domestic political institutions, while we do see China taking a greater interest in DPRK policy and the six-party talks due to increased centralization of foreign policymaking around Hu Jintao, the strategies Chinese negotiators have brought to the six-party talks do not seem to be "hijacked" or adequately explained by these factors. In addition, while state-society relations in the economic realm have seen a decrease in centralized regulation that may partially explain why China no longer offers North Korea the type of economic exchanges it once did, this factor also figures minimally in China's six-party strategy. Overall, we observe no patterns emerging from China's six-party strategies that would suggest domestic political factors have co-opted the process.

In terms of the domestic policymaking structure, competing political parties or policymaking bodies do not come to bear on DPRK strategy at the six-party talks. While China has indeed greatly decentralized and diversified its foreign policymaking setup as compared to the eras of Mao and Deng, the process is still centralized, with the president's office at the helm of much of DPRK policymaking.⁹⁴

In addition, China has seen a shift in its overall approach to foreign affairs with the transition from the so-called third generation with Jiang Zemin at the core to the Hu Jintao-headed fourth generation. This transition began with the 16th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in November 2002, which brought Hu into the leadership position, and continued with the 10th National People's Congress in 2003. By the time of this latter event, Hu had reportedly assumed responsibility for foreign affairs, and it was Hu who reportedly launched the major diplomatic initiative to bring the United States and North Korea together for talks.⁹⁵

In terms of strategy at the six-party talks, this relatively centralized setup on issues of foreign policy means there is little or no bureaucratic infighting to slow or hijack the process. Furthermore, while China's domestic political setup gives Hu's office a large amount of control on DPRK policy, which has resulted in Beijing placing increased importance on the talks as a whole, the Chinese strategy seen at the six-party process is not explained strongly along the lines of domestic political structural factors.

In much the same vein, relations between state and society in China rarely affect strategy choice regarding international negotiation, the six-party talks being no exception. There are few formal institutions that mediate between state and society on foreign policy issues, nor institutions

⁹⁴ Evan S. Medeiros and M. Taylor Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy."

⁹⁵ Andrew Scobell, "China and North Korea: From Comrades-in-Arms to Allies at Arm's Length" (Washington: Strategic Studies Institute, March 2004).

allowing social forces to mobilize for their interests if they oppose the state's foreign policy, making the central state quite autonomous from direct pressure.⁹⁶

However, state-society relations *have* shifted significantly under the transition to the Hu Jintao administration in terms of economic control. Hu and his policymaking team have brought "fervent pragmatism" in economic diplomacy to Chinese international economic policy, under which Chinese private-sector international exchange on a market basis is growing strongly, with the central government no longer steering at the helm.⁹⁷ Under this more market-oriented setup, the previous centrally executed economic exchange between Chinese firms and other states' firms has all but disappeared. This is due to the fact that with these reforms in the realm of state-business relations, it has become difficult for the government to mobilize resources from the private sector for a centrally directed plan or bilateral government agreement.⁹⁸

China's economic relations with North Korea, once heavily centralized, were not spared in this shift, either.⁹⁹ For, as was seen in the previous section, while keeping North Korea propped up economically is in China's security interests in order to avoid a flood of refugees and North Korea's implosion, with the state no longer able to drive economic initiatives, current investment in North Korea is paltry, as the North's weak economy and closed nature do not provide a large or welcoming market by any standards.¹⁰⁰ In addition, North Korea has seen its grant-type aid go from 14 percent of its total imports from China in 1999 to around 1 percent in 2008.¹⁰¹ We see this factor possibly affecting China's six-party strategy in the fact that China is no longer offering the types of economic opportunities to North Korea it once had, keeping economic exchange off the table as an incentive. In its stead, we see China offering only aid to prevent DPRK collapse.

In sum, while we do see the relationship between China and North Korea changing due to internal factors related to China's domestic policymaking structure, the strategies Chinese negotiators have brought to the six-party talks do not seem to be "hijacked" or adequately explained by these factors. In addition, while state-society relations in the area of business may partially explain why China no longer offers North Korea the type of economic exchanges it once did, the manifestation of this factor in China's six-party strategy is minimal (an "absence" rather

⁹⁶ David Bachman, "Domestic Sources of Chinese Foreign Policy," in Samuel S. Kim, ed., *China and the World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), pp. 42-59.

⁹⁷ Jaewoo Choo, "Mirroring North Korea's Growing Economic Dependence on China," pp. 343-350.

⁹⁸ Snyder and Wit, "Chinese Views: Breaking the Stalemate on the Korean Peninsula."

⁹⁹ Jaewoo Choo, "Mirroring North Korea's Growing Economic Dependence on China," pp. 345-350.

¹⁰⁰ Snyder and Wit, "Chinese Views: Breaking the Stalemate on the Korean Peninsula."

¹⁰¹ Jaewoo Choo, "Mirroring North Korea's Growing Economic Dependence on China," p. 350.

than a tangible presence in terms of strategy). Thus, tracing the effects of domestic political institutions does not offer a substantial explanation of the strategies Chinese negotiators have brought to the talks.

iii. National Identity

In examining the first factor comprising national identity, norms on the use of force, China's stance does not appear to have crystallized into a norm; therefore, its explanatory power regarding six-party strategy is limited. In looking at the second identity factor, historical experience, while China's legacy as an ideological 'brother' to North Korea bears little influence on its strategy at the negotiations, China's centuries-long experience as regional hegemon informs its current rise – an aspect that can be seen in its balancing against U.S. dominance at the talks. This imbues the variable of national identity with some explanatory power in terms of China's strategy at the talks, though the latter aspect overlaps a great deal with China's realist-derived agenda to increase its power in the region.

Realist scholars have often portrayed China as possessing norms that sanction the use of force in terms of maximizing power, security, or territorial integrity.¹⁰² However, more recent studies make a convincing case that Chinese policymakers in fact value diplomacy in order to settle territorial disputes.¹⁰³ In a similar vein, other scholars argue that Chinese experts and officials still abide by Deng Xiaoping's peace and development thesis, tending to view China's regional security environment as generally benign and nonthreatening, citing as evidence the approach taken in China's 2004 defense white papers and annual assessments published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Academy of Military Sciences, and other state-linked policy think tanks.¹⁰⁴ This second group of arguments sees China's policy toward Taiwan as an outlier against a general strategy of diplomacy in Beijing.¹⁰⁵ Thus, though the existence of such a norm one way or another is as of yet unclear, China's strategy of nearly unwavering engagement at the six-party talks would seem to support the latter argument. Overall, though, this factor's explanatory power vis-à-vis six-party strategy remains inconclusive.

¹⁰² Aaron L. Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Winter 1993-1994), pp. 5-33; John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.

¹⁰³ Evan S. Medeiros, "Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-Pacific Stability," M. Taylor Fravel, "Power Shifts and Escalation: Explaining China's Use of Force in Territorial Disputes," *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Winter 2007/08), pp. 44-83.

¹⁰⁴ David Shambaugh, "China Engages Asia: Reshaping the Regional Order," *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (Winter 2004/5), pp. 64-99.

¹⁰⁵ Ming Liu, "China and the North Korea Crisis: Facing Test and Transition," pp. 358-360; M. Taylor Fravel, "Regime Insecurity and International Cooperation: Explaining China's Compromises in Territorial Disputes," *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Fall 2005).

When looking at the second factor comprising national identity, China's historical experience in world and regional affairs, it might seem likely that direct parallels between China and North Korea would influence the choices Beijing's six-party strategists make. For China and North Korea share a great deal of common historical experience: a physical border, a long symbiotic relationship, a Confucian heritage, a history of Japanese occupation as well as fighting alongside one another against U.S. and U.N. forces during the Korean war, a communist/Marxist-Leninist ideological base, pariah status in the international community at various times, and experience being refused of diplomatic recognition by all but a handful of nations.¹⁰⁶

However, the reality is that the relationship between the two countries is no longer one of "lips and teeth." That period in fact was extremely short-lived: China and North Korea have not shared that kind of closeness since North Korea began to veer toward its own unusual brand of government.¹⁰⁷ The relationship saw its precipitous decline correlate with the rise of Kim Jong-il's influence in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the normalization of China-ROK relations in 1992, and the death of Kim Il-Sung in 1994. Between 1994 and 1999, contact between Beijing and Pyongyang was almost completely severed. The late 1990s, while not acrimonious, were marked by tension between the two countries. The North, angered at its unmet demand for additional aid from China, led Kim Jong Il to threaten to play the "Taiwan card" and set up relations with Taipei. In 1997, Pyongyang's official news service called Deng Xiaoping a "traitor to socialism" after China pressed the North to undergo economic reforms. Beijing in turn threatened to halt food aid, at which point Pyongyang initiated talks with Taiwan about opening direct air links between Taipei and Pyongyang, after which China dropped the threat.¹⁰⁸ Additionally, it was not until 1996 that China realized it would be in its interest to improve economic ties with North Korea due to changing international relations in Northeast Asia (in which South Korea and the United States in 1995 began to provide Pyongyang with aid), a fact that helps counter any theory that China aids North Korea because of their lingering ideological bond.

Clearly, direct historical experience between the two bears little influence on China-North Korea relations, a fact borne out via Chinese strategy at the six-party talks. For although China has kept energy and food aid and investment flowing to Pyongyang, and has been willing neither

¹⁰⁶ Gregory J. Moore, "How North Korea Threatens China's Interests: Understanding Chinese 'Duplicity' on the North Korean Nuclear Issue."

¹⁰⁷ Balazs Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2005).

¹⁰⁸ Andrew Scobell, "China and North Korea: From Comrades-in-Arms to Allies at Arm's Length."

to remove these engagement tactics nor apply significant pressure in its strategies at the six-party talks, this stance has less to do with the two countries' shared historical and ideological legacy and more to do with realist calculations regarding China's drive for power maximization.

China's six-party strategy can be better explained through another factor stemming in large part from historical memory: China's past as the former regional hegemon. In fact, China's current ascent marks not the first but the fourth time China has risen to regional great-power status.¹⁰⁹ China is now aiming to regain this status by becoming a world economic and political power.¹¹⁰ It has done so through strong regional economic engagement, particularly with Japan and South Korea: China has been both Japan's and South Korea's number one trading partner since 2004, and Japan is China's third largest trading partner. In 2005, China became South Korea's top export market, as well.¹¹¹ As covered above, through strategic provision of economic and fuel aid, China is looking to retain influence on North Korea, making it more costly for North Korea to ignore China's influence or harm its interests.¹¹² It again must be noted that this factor, too, overlaps a great deal with China's realist-driven drive to maximize power.

Overall, while normative influences on China's six-party strategy are unclear, China's national identity via its historical experience as regional hegemon bears a certain amount of explanatory power in terms of China's strategy at the six-party talks – but with the qualification that realist concerns also explain the same behavior.

In examining possible drivers of its six-party strategy, China's realist calculus, based on growing as a regional power, factors the strongest in explaining its strategic choices at the six-party talks. Following behind this variable in terms of explanatory power is national identity, due to China's attempts to regain its status in the region as a factor of its historical legacy as regional hegemon.

Given the findings of the analysis – that the strategies China's policymakers and negotiators have brought to the talks stem from concerns primarily realist in nature – we **do not reject** the hypothesis in the case of China – though there are two caveats worthy of mention. The first is that the factor of national identity plays a noticeable role in explaining China's strategic

¹⁰⁹ Wang Gungwu quoted in David Shambaugh, "China Engages Asia: Reshaping the Regional Order," p. 99.

¹¹⁰ Evan S. Medeiros, "Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-Pacific Stability."

¹¹¹ "North Korean Trade with China as Reported in Chinese Customs Statistics," Nautilus Institute, 2006 (<http://www.nautilus.org/fora/security/0679Aden.pdf>).

¹¹² Scott Snyder, "Responses to North Korea's Nuclear Test: Capitulation or Collective Action?"

calculus, as well. The second is that although realist concerns prevail in the findings for China, the North Korea threat is not prime among its concerns; rather, balancing against other regional military and economic hegemony – namely, the United States and Japan – takes precedence.

c. Origin Trace of the Strongest Explanatory Factors

[Realist Concerns/National Identity]

Why, then, would realist concerns and national identity combine to explain China's strategy at the six-party talks? The answer I propose comprises two parts. First, in terms of national identity, Deng Xiaoping's pervasive legacy of reform has led to increased pragmatism in Beijing in terms of economic and security affairs. Second, in terms of realist calculations, China's current myriad security concerns – not only beyond its borders, but within them, as well – have led China to aim for economic growth beyond all other strategic goals.

When in the late 1970s Deng Xiaoping rose to become China's paramount leader, he placed the modernization of China at the top of his agenda, attempting to usher in a new era of "Reform and Opening to the Outside."¹¹³ In 1978, Deng famously said that "to get rich is glorious," symbolically marking the beginning of China's market reforms. Three decades later, after a much-charted economic rise, China is at a place where its Communist Party can produce a policy like the "*xiaokang* society" – envisioning a China in which the majority of the population is middle class.¹¹⁴

In tandem with its continued economic drive, China conditions its present role on the Korean peninsula upon compatibility with its general foreign policy and strategic interests, which are to guarantee a stable periphery and to integrate further into the international community. This includes promotion of economic cooperation with developed countries and elevating its image as a responsible power – both of which work toward its goal of economic modernization, leading China to press North Korea to acquiesce to its requests in the economic and security realms.¹¹⁵

In addition, China hopes to raise the barrier for U.S. action against it, as well as U.S. ability to contain or constrain China in the region. China has done so by attempting to bind the United States through multilateral organizations, with the hopes that such organizations could create norms and structures that limit U.S. involvement in regional security affairs, or perhaps force

¹¹³ Chen Jian, "Limits of the 'Lips and Teeth' Alliance: An Historical Review of Chinese-North Korean Relations," in *Uneasy Allies: Fifty Years of China-North Korea Relations*, (Washington: The Woodrow Wilson Center, September 2003).

¹¹⁴ John S. Park, "Inside Multilateralism: The Six-party Talks."

¹¹⁵ Ming Liu, "China and the North Korea Crisis: Facing Test and Transition," pp. 358-360.

Washington to make unwanted policy trade-offs. As Chinese analysts see U.S. strategy as aimed toward maintaining its global dominance and integrating China into an international system heavily influenced by U.S. rules, China seeks to minimize perceived U.S. efforts to constrain its regional aspirations.¹¹⁶ China's behavior stems from its general foreign policy goals of maximizing influence, leverage and freedom of action while pursuing economic development towards its rise to great power status.

Along the lines of this focus on maintaining pragmatism in economic and security affairs, Beijing not only pays attention to political and strategic considerations in its engagement policy with North Korea, but commercial ones, as well. In engaging North Korea, China is also seeking to boost its market share, as well as obtain greater access to the North's natural resources. North Korea and China have set up a barter system using the North's natural resources.¹¹⁷ China also needs overseas markets because its own domestic ones are saturated, as since the late 1990s production capacity has outpaced internal demand.¹¹⁸

But economically, China does not cater to North Korea's needs – while the North desires capital in the construction materials, machine building, and electronic communications sectors, Chinese investment is heavily concentrated in the sectors wherein China's need lie or where its companies serve to make the best profit – for example, resource extraction and the service industry. China forged the “Agreement on Economic and Technology Cooperation” in May 1996, with China announcing resumption of “friendship prices” as a follow-up – actions all due to pragmatic strategic consideration on the part of China.¹¹⁹

China's realist calculations vis-à-vis its North Korea policy of economic engagement along with an interest in keeping more aggressive U.S. tactics in check both stem in large part from Chinese decision-makers' desire to protect their country's economic growth from damage either through a U.S. military confrontation of the North or a North Korean collapse. In short, China wants stability.

Given this goal, there is another facet to China's realist calculations involving North Korea: some scholars cite China's present top security concern as an internal one.¹²⁰ China is in a phase in which domestic instability is increasing due to the transition from a centrally planned to

¹¹⁶ Evan S. Medeiros, “Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-Pacific Stability.”

¹¹⁷ Jae Cheol Kim, “The Political Economy of Chinese Investment in North Korea,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 46, No. 6 (December 2006), pp. 898-919.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Jaewoo Choo, “Mirroring North Korea's Growing Economic Dependence on China,” p. 350.

¹²⁰ Samuel S. Kim, *China and the World*, p. 42; M. Taylor Fravel, “Regime Insecurity and International Cooperation: Explaining China's Compromises in Territorial Disputes.”

a market economy. If not managed carefully, this instability could fan social unrest. Taking an historical view, events outside of China set off many political movements in Chinese history in the last century, so the government is watching the DPRK situation closely for this reason, among others.¹²¹

While the strength of this factor is subject to debate, it is clear that sustaining a pattern of economic growth is within China's best interests for domestic political purposes. China requires an estimated growth rate of seven percent annually to create enough jobs for people entering the workforce; falling behind this number therefore might create domestic turmoil.¹²² The collapse of North Korea, with the issue of refugees flooding over the border into China and the regional instability it would produce, offers a severe threat to China's sustaining economic growth – and thus a severe threat to its internal security, in addition to the external security factors North Korea presents to China.

2. Japan

a. Strategic Approaches within the Six-party Process

Japanese negotiators have brought two distinct sets of strategies to the six-party talks. The first was a policy of engagement through dialogue, replaced rapidly with one of containment – though both are related far less to North Korea's actions involving its nuclear program than to Japanese policymakers seeking resolution for the kidnapping issue.

In the year leading up to the six-party talks, Japanese officials saw unprecedented dialogue with their North Korean counterparts, including the 2002 Junichiro Koizumi-Kim Jong-il summit. However, it was at this summit that Kim admitted to North Korea's kidnapping of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s, a fact that would soon gain great importance in terms of relations between the two countries. At the same time, Japanese lawmakers also enlisted stronger tactics to deal with the North Korea threat. Japan joined as a Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) participant from its onset in May 2003, and the government introduced a bill to authorize economic sanctions without UN mandate. Both moves were directly aimed at ratcheting up

¹²¹ Gregory J. Moore, "How North Korea Threatens China's Interests: Understanding Chinese 'Duplicity' on the North Korean Nuclear Issue."

¹²² James T. Laney and Jason T. Shaplen, "Disarming North Korea," *Foreign Affairs*, February 21, 2007.

pressure on North Korea. Several Diet members pressed Koizumi to block remittances to North Korea as the second nuclear crisis unfolded, but Koizumi remained reluctant to pursue sanctions, reopening talks with Pyongyang instead.¹²³

However, just as the six-party talks began, Japan began cracking down on DPRK commercial shipping, and Tokyo policymakers also managed to severely slow the remittance pipeline ethnic Koreans in Japan use to send money to relatives in the DPRK; this demographic transferred \$650-850 million annually in the early 1990s, but the figure had dropped to \$200 million by 2003.¹²⁴ When Koizumi returned to Pyongyang for a second summit with Kim on May 22, 2004, he managed to negotiate for the release of five of the Japanese abductees' children and the opening of an investigation into ten other abductees. However, the public mood was beginning to shift further against North Korea: Koizumi's second visit was less well-received publicly, and DNA testing in November 2004 revealed that remains North Korea returned to Japan on the pretense they belonged to several kidnapping victims did not match up to their identity.¹²⁵ During the same time, Japanese lawmakers had begun a stronger crackdown on North Korean interests. In June 2004, parliament passed new laws allowing easier crackdown on remittances to and trade with North Korea. These laws also added stricter monitoring of the only direct ferry between the two countries as well as North Korean cargo ships. In September 2004, the Liberal Democratic Party released a statement calling for North Korea to account for others believed abducted, with economic sanctions called for should Pyongyang fail to positively respond.¹²⁶

Through the first three rounds of the six-party process, Japanese negotiators remained closest to the position held by their U.S. counterparts, though on several occasions Koizumi remarked on needing to be in lock-step with others in the group. In March 2005, Koizumi stated his reluctance to enforce sanctions, saying that the North need not be referred to the UN Security Council. He also showed interest in a third Koizumi-Kim summit in Pyongyang.¹²⁷ As the process continued, however, other lawmakers and the Japanese public began to press increasingly for resolving the kidnapping issue.

After the missile test, Japanese officials requested an emergency UN Security Council

¹²³ Leon Sigal, "Misplaying North Korea and Losing Friends and Influence in Northeast Asia."

¹²⁴ The Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Profile: North Korea.

¹²⁵ In another bizarre twist to the case, an article published in the journal *Nature* in February 2005 shed doubt upon the accuracy of the Japanese DNA testing. Regardless, the reaction of the Japanese public had already been galvanized. For details on the remains, see "Japan and North Korea: Bones of Contention," International Crisis Group, June 27, 2005.

¹²⁶ Michael Horowitz, "Who's Behind That Curtain? Unveiling Potential Leverage over Pyongyang."

¹²⁷ Leon Sigal, "Misplaying North Korea and Losing Friends and Influence in Northeast Asia."

session and drafted the initial UNSC resolution, which included reference to Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which includes powers up to and including the use of force. In addition, Cabinet Secretary Abe and other officials suggested the possibility of a pre-emptive strike, though were later chastised by more moderate Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) members.¹²⁸ Following the launches, Japanese lawmakers imposed bilateral sanctions on North Korea, including banning ferry links, diplomatic visits, and charter flights. In addition, the Japanese military sought to purchase 16 PAC-3 missiles from the United States.¹²⁹

When the North staged its nuclear test, Japanese negotiators took the lead next to the U.S. negotiating team in a push for another, stronger UNSC resolution. Japanese lawmakers also launched a number of new sanctions, effective immediately; Foreign Minister Taro Aso even went so far as to discuss the nuclear option for Japan, a move that also brought rebuke from other lawmakers. In drafting its UNSC resolution amendment, Japanese negotiators sought to place additional restrictions on North Korean ships and aircraft as well as products, and to block North Korean officials from being able to leave the country.¹³⁰ When these ended up excised from the final resolution after negotiations, Japanese lawmakers imposed additional sanctions beyond the resolution's wording, including banning North Korea's Mangyongbong 92 ferry from entering Japanese ports. Tokyo also issued an advisory discouraging Japanese citizens from traveling to North Korea.¹³¹

When the February 13 Joint Statement was signed, Japanese negotiators refused to be party to provision of energy with the other members aid until satisfactory resolution of the kidnapping issue, and also refused to remove its economic sanctions, extending them for six months on April 5, 2007.

Strategy: Japanese negotiators' range of strategies during the six-party process runs the gamut. Beginning with a dialogue strategy clearly located at the engagement end of the axis, Japanese negotiation tactics moved quickly toward those associated with containment, including levying strong sanctions and threats to use force. This wide variance in strategy maps onto the sudden entry of a new set of interrelated red and green lines related to resolving North Korean agents' kidnappings of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s. Certainly, Koizumi's early efforts seem to represent an attempt to "socialize" North Korea further into the existing order; it is

¹²⁸ "After North Korea's Missile Launch: Are the Nuclear Talks Dead?"

¹²⁹ *Jane's Defense Industry*, October 10, 2006.

¹³⁰ "Bush Rebukes North Korea; U.S. Seeks New U.N. Sanctions," *The New York Times*, October 10, 2006.

¹³¹ "Japan Won't Compromise on North Korea Abductions Issue," *Bloomberg*, March 6, 2007.

less clear whether Japan's subsequent pressure tactics are in response to the threat of North Korea's 'going nuclear,' however, as the new red lines coincided with the perception of Japanese officials and the public that Pyongyang was providing an inadequate response to requests for resolution to the kidnapping issue.

| Approaches/ Strategems | Red Line(s) | Green Line(s) | Incentives and Pressure Tactics |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>1st – Dialogue; pledge to stay in lock-step with other six-party members</p> <p>2nd – Pressure tactics; unilateral refusal to adhere to terms of February 13, 2007 agreement</p> | <p>Throughout: DPRK establishing status as nuclear state; missile testing or aggressive posturing</p> <p>2nd – Continued refusal to address kidnapping concerns</p> | <p>Throughout: Denuclearization</p> <p>2nd – Reopening of and satisfactory investigation and closure of remaining 10 kidnapping cases</p> | <p>Sticks: Sanctions on remittances, trade, transportation; inspection of vessels</p> <p>Carrots: Compensation following normalization</p> |

b. Analysis of State Approach

In analyzing Japan's six-party strategy, while realist concerns hold some explanatory power in Japanese policymaking toward North Korea in general, they are not strongly manifest in Japan's six-party strategy. Instead, the resolution of the kidnapping issue has trumped these concerns at the six-party format. In addition, the bifurcated domestic policymaking structure, the ways in which the Japanese state interacts with civil society groups, and a resurgence of nationalism have brought the kidnapping issue to the fore in Japan's strategy at the negotiations.

i. Realist Concerns

While the security concerns Japan faced due to North Korea's weapons programs have entered Tokyo's policymaking choices in other arenas, in the area of the six-party talks they hold limited explanatory power, overshadowed by Japanese negotiators' focus on the kidnapping issue.

An increased North Korean threat presents Japan with a number of strong security concerns. First and foremost, Tokyo is already within North Korean missile range; this threat

will increase significantly if the DPRK becomes capable of fitting its missiles with nuclear warheads. Indeed, Japan has reacted at other times and in other arenas to the security threat posed by rises in North Korea's military capabilities. The start of the second North Korean nuclear crisis saw Japan reacting with several major security measures: launching two reconnaissance satellites over North Korea, moving to acquire Patriot Missile Defense systems from the United States, and passing an Emergency Law to allow the Japanese military to respond to threats more effectively. This was not a new phenomenon but a continuation of Japan's drive to increase its military capabilities; after North Korea's 1998 Taepodong launch, Japan deployed a home-grown spy satellite and granted authorization to its navy and coast guard to use force against suspicious ships, which they did when they sank a North Korean vessel in December 2001.¹³²

Yet when we turn our focus to Japan's range of tactics within the six-party talks, we find it inconsistent in addressing the security concerns presented by North Korea's nuclear weapons program. In terms of external balancing, during the initial escalation of the second North Korean nuclear crisis, while the United States, Japan's main regional ally, pursued strong containment tactics, Japan was more interested in a strategy of engagement. In fact, it was only after the kidnapping issue became a focal point at the talks that Japan's strategy registered any strong shift in reaction. While Japan's strategy began to line up with that of the United States, this by no means represents a consensus in viewpoints between the two countries regarding the nature of the North Korea threat, as Japan's red lines remain very different from those of the United States. In fact, the red line for which Japan has employed its strongest enforcement tactics is related to the kidnapping issue, not to the rise in North Korea's military capabilities.

In terms of reacting to any relative economic gain on the part of North Korea, Japan has tried to stifle North Korean revenue generation, as policymakers in Tokyo have tightened the vise on economic exchange with the North. However, this strategy of economic containment is again tied to the kidnapping issue rather than to North Korean actions that would increase its military threat.

Therefore, Japan's strategic calculus at the six-party talk seems less tied to realist concerns linked to the North Korean nuclear threat and more to the issue of Japan's resolving the kidnappings of its citizens.

¹³² For details on these security initiatives, see "Japan and North Korea: Bones of Contention," International Crisis Group, June 27, 2005.

ii. Domestic Political Institutions

Japan's domestic politics are strongly linked to six-party strategy. First, the structure of the policymaking process has explained the primacy of certain strategies at the six-party venue. Second, the ways in which state and civil society interact in Japan have allowed for the kidnapping issue (which began as a civil society concern) to be co-opted quickly into national policy, manifest in the issue's prevalence in Japanese strategy at the six-party talks.

The structure of the Japanese state comes into play in six-party strategy-making in that its setup has helped strengthen the ability of officials in power to carry out policies along their own selected lines. When Junichiro Koizumi gained power in 2001, his new North Korea policy-making mechanism was "very top-down and extremely closely held," engaging only a handful of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) officials in communication with a few top LDP leaders in the Koizumi cabinet.¹³³ This allowed Koizumi to pursue his initial policy of engagement with North Korea, and then effectively switch tactics when citizens began demanding answers on the kidnapping issue. With Koizumi's departure from prime ministerial office in September 2006, Japanese policymaking on North Korea has been done via a 'two-track' structure, with the LDP's abductions issue pressure group-related factions on one side and the official Cabinet Committee on North Korea on the other. Again, evidence of this policymaking mechanism has surfaced within the six-party talks themselves, for although MOFA drafted the statements to be used at the talks, the prime minister and the chief cabinet secretary had to approve all language, ensuring that the abduction issue has remained paramount in strategy Japanese negotiators bring to the six-party table.¹³⁴

In terms of the second factor comprising domestic political institutions – state-society interaction – two crucial components affect Japan's six-party talks strategy. The first is the fact that political parties face election by popular vote in Japan; the second involves the particular set of relations between state and civil society groups in Japan. Due to the first component, LDP members have felt continued pressure to court popular opinion after the party's sudden and troubling loss of parliamentary majority in 1993. After the public outcry following Kim Jong-il's admission at the 2002 Koizumi-Kim summit that North Korea had indeed kidnapped Japanese citizens, LDP members began to seize upon the issue and use it instrumentally in order for the LDP to retain power. Indeed, Shinzo Abe rode the issue in order to cement his successful bid for

¹³³ James L. Schoff, "Political Fences and Bad Neighbors: North Korea Policymaking in Japan and Implications for the United States," pp. 24-28.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

party chairman in 2006.¹³⁵

As for the second component, the Japanese state often “co-opts” movements in civil society in a top-down manner to gain public approval – and in some cases, civil society is able to reverse the process and infiltrate policymaking in a bottom-up manner.¹³⁶ The kidnapping issue itself began as a civil society movement, and was taken up by LDP politicians after the movement had gained a foothold through local government-sponsored interest groups in terms of national visibility.¹³⁷

Both components have helped to ensure that kidnapping concerns have stayed at the top of the Japanese negotiators’ agenda at the negotiations.

In Japan’s case, we therefore see domestic political institutions affecting strategy at the six-party talks on several levels. The need to retain public popularity has driven lawmakers to court the kidnapping issue, and the bifurcated policymaking structure and relations between state and civil society have allowed them to do so more effectively. This has led to the kidnapping issue superseding six-party negotiators addressing other objective, empirical factors – namely, resolving the issue of North Korea’s nuclear weapons program.

iii. National Identity

In looking at drivers behind strategy during the six-party process, aspects of Japan’s national identity indeed factor in the explanation. Japan’s containment-oriented strategies and threats of force at the six-party talks may represent manifestations of more hard-line lawmakers’ recent “slicing away” of its pacifist norms. In addition, Japan’s resurgent nationalism has helped fuel anger surrounding the kidnapping issue, keeping it a paramount public concern and thus influencing policymakers to use the six-party format to push for its resolution.

Japan holds strong, constitutive pacifist norms, forged in the shadow of the memory of the brutality and defeat of the Second World War and institutionalized within the subsequent Peace Constitution of 1950.¹³⁸ However, in recent years, a group of policymakers within the LDP have been able to effect a slow “salami slicing” away of these strongly-established antimilitarist

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 27.

¹³⁶ Susan Shirk, *Losing Face: Status Politics in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 10-14; Patricia G. Steinhoff, “Political Ties of Visible (Right) and Invisible (Left) Social Movements in Contemporary Japan,” unpublished manuscript.

¹³⁷ Patricia G. Steinhoff, *ibid.*

¹³⁸ Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security*; Thomas U. Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany and Japan*.

norms.¹³⁹ The strategies employed by Japanese negotiators during the six-party process – containment measures, with several threats of use of force and a pushing for strong UN sanctions that would reference such a possibility – may reflect this harder-line stance toward the North Korea threat, as well as toward security issues in general among the more hard-line LDP camp. However, the escalation of this chipping away at Japan’s pacifism is a recent and still nascent process, with the norm of pacifism still strong.¹⁴⁰ In addition, as was seen above, domestic political structures and state-society relations provide a stronger explanation of why Japan’s choice in strategy would move in directions that do not match up to empirical security factors.

Offering a more compelling explanation of how ideational variables may be driving six-party strategy is the second factor comprising national identity, historical memory. Japan’s legacy as a regional hegemon and colonial power in the first half of the 20th century, coupled with the rise of the North Korea and China’s rise as an economic power in the region, have prompted Japanese lawmakers and the public to begin to shift toward a new form of nationalism as a means of shaping and protecting its security interests.¹⁴¹ Indeed, in particular, North Korea’s actions in the last decade – from the 1998 missile test to admissions of kidnapping Japanese citizens and its development and testing of a nuclear device – have been a strong factor in lighting this nationalist fuse in Japan.¹⁴² The kidnapping issue in particular has galvanized the Japanese public in an unprecedented manner: a March 2007 Yomiuri Shimbun survey showed 81 percent of those polled supported the Abe administration’s policy of not providing any economic and energy aid to North Korea until progress is made on the kidnapping issue.¹⁴³ These forces have underscored the importance of the kidnapping issue, helping explain its prevalence in Japan’s six-party strategy against what we might expect given objective, empirical factors.

In sum, Japanese politicians’ chipping away at the country’s strong antimilitarist norms is possibly manifest in the strong pressure tactics and strategies of containment brought to the talks – though this factor seems limited at best. Japan’s collective memory provides greater insight into why the kidnapping issue is paramount in Japanese negotiators’ red and green lines; however, domestic political institutional factors explain Japanese negotiators’ deviation from the strategies expected given empirical security factors. Thus, issues of national identity appear

¹³⁹ Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007).

¹⁴⁰ See, for example, Llewelyn Hughes, “Why Japan Will Not Go Nuclear (Yet): International and Domestic Constraints on the Nuclearization of Japan,” *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Spring 2007), pp. 67-96.

¹⁴¹ James T. Laney and Jason T. Shaplen, “Disarming North Korea.”

¹⁴² “Japan in a Bind over North Korea,” *Asia Times*, March 7, 2007.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

limited but present in steering the strategy choices made by the Japanese negotiating team.

In examining possible drivers of Japan's six-party strategy, instead of realist concerns, as predicted by the hypothesis, domestic political institutions factor the strongest in explaining Japanese strategic choices at the six-party negotiations. This is due to a calculated drive by politicians to maintain popularity through the kidnapping issue, a policymaking setup that ensured the issue would be pushed at the talks, and a particular form of state-civil society relations that allowed politicians to take up the issue instrumentally. In addition, Japan's national identity comes into play somewhat, for policymakers' strategy during the six-party talks may represent a chipping away at Japan's pacifist norms, and its resurgent nationalism has contributed to strong feelings of animosity among the Japanese populace toward the DPRK due to the kidnapping issue.

Therefore, given these findings, we **reject** the hypothesis in the case of Japan.

c. Origin Trace of the Strongest Explanatory Factors

[Domestic Political Institutions/National Identity]

Why would Japan's domestic institutions and national identity come to bear so heavily on its DPRK strategy? The answer I propose first requires a brief glance into the history of later 20th-century Japan's domestic political setup.

During the Cold War, the LDP was on the whole anti-communist and pro-U.S., with the ROK recognized as the legitimate government on the peninsula in the Basic Agreement of 1965. However, at the same time, there were at times pro-Communist or Socialist politicians within the ranks of the diet.¹⁴⁴ In 1993, the long-ruling LDP fragmented and lost its grip on power, ushering in a period of weak political leadership. Koizumi and his circle were able to again consolidate power during the first decade of the 21st century on the issue of revising Japan's Peace Constitution, with their strategic addressing of the North Korea threat a major component of their

¹⁴⁴ James L. Schoff, "Political Fences and Bad Neighbors: North Korea Policymaking in Japan and Implications for the United States," pp. 24-28.

rise to popularity.

The particular historical nature of Japan-DPRK relations over the course of North Korea's existence also requires elaboration. Given that North Korea is an extremely closed country, what limited signaling it does is necessarily mapped onto existing perceptions to form a cohesive whole from which perceptions – and then policy decisions – can be made. North Korea, closed tightly, offered very little signaling that would allow for Japan to “make sense” of the country. Japan's deep interactions with that part of the world all occurred during the colonial period, when the nation was still one Korea. In addition, though Japan was ostensibly allied with the United States during the Cold War, and thus North Korea was the stated “enemy,” geopolitical dynamics were more complex than such an explanation would suggest. For, as stated, throughout the existence of the LDP and within Japanese politics on a whole, factions existed that were pro-China and pro-DPRK, with a large overlap between the two. In fact, even through the early 1990s, some cabinets included diet members more sympathetic to North Korea than to the South.¹⁴⁵ In addition, Japan's leaders did not fully “buy into” the United States' Cold War rhetoric, but instead expertly instrumentalized the Cold War in order to get what they desired, beginning with Shigeru Yoshida, who managed to keep Japan from rearming and joining in the post World War-II Cold War struggle, as was the desire of the United States, to Takeo Fukuda, who attempted to use the surge in the Cold War in the late 1970s to reverse the very trend Yoshida had put in place.¹⁴⁶

The result? North Korea was largely ignored. When Japan's normalization talks with the DPRK finally came, they were under the aegis of neighboring South Korea's late 1980s nordpolitik policy. The issue was unique in that MOFA did not have a long history of involvement with North Korea. Indeed, less than half of the Japanese population from the 1970s until the early 1990s held a “bad impression” of North Korea – with the Japanese government having largely ignored North Korea throughout the Cold War.¹⁴⁷ Contrast this lack of a conception of North Korea with the situation after the 2002 Koizumi-Kim Dae Jung summit, when nearly 82 percent of the Japanese public had a “bad” impression of the DPRK - with 90 percent naming the abduction issue as the most pressing concern. Where a void of information once stood, several aggressive signals on the part of the North – including its 1998 missile launch and its restarting its nuclear program – had effectively rewritten its identity for the Japanese public.

¹⁴⁵ Schoff, Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Schoff, Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Schoff, Ibid.

Indeed, Kim Jong-il's admission, coming at the 2002 Koizumi-Kim Dae Jung summit, that his government had in the past abducted Japanese citizens, resulted in the public, by then animated and intent on getting answers from the North about the lot of their own, largely rejecting the subsequent Pyongyang Declaration. Indeed, from this point on, domestic concerns effectively hijacked North Korea policy – namely, the public, pressure groups, and hard-line factions within the LDP that sought nearly full attention on getting answers on the kidnapping issue.

Far from being the most important issue on the diplomatic plate between the DPRK and Japan, as it was at the 2002 and 2004 Koizumi-Kim summits, the movement to gain answers on North Korea's kidnappings began with a grass-roots petition campaign in 1997. Soon after, a Diet members group formed on the issue, and then a group of local-level legislators concerned about the issue. Formal organizations followed, then a Cabinet-level committee, and then the passage of related official legislation.¹⁴⁸

The issue is an emotional one for the Japanese public and a popular topic for the Japanese media. However, the question remains: How did the issue gain such ground in Japanese political and policymaking realms? A main factor was the issue's coinciding with heightened national security fears regarding North Korea, appealing to the anti North Korean sentiment rising in Japan at the time, fitting "very neatly into a particular political agenda."¹⁴⁹ The same North Korea that had just 'announced itself' to Japan was now the subject of a great deal of public ire. LDP politicians aiming to hold onto or gain popularity were keen to pick up on this. Koizumi scored a diplomatic and public relations coup by bringing the issue to the first summit, and "rode the tiger" as long as he could.¹⁵⁰

But Koizumi may have in fact brought the spark to the tinder: groups dedicated to the issue soon became more and more vocal about what they saw as a slight to the Japanese people by a MOFA willing to take North Korea's word at face value and move on.¹⁵¹ The sentiment quickly spread to the general populace. In an attempt to retain popularity, Koizumi, though personally more interested in dialogue than pressure tactics, shifted lead on the kidnapping issue from MOFA to the more pressure-oriented Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe. His

¹⁴⁸ Patricia G. Steinhoff, "Political Ties of Visible (Right) and Invisible (Left) Social Movements in Contemporary Japan."

¹⁴⁹ Patricia G. Steinhoff, *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ James L. Schoff, "Political Fences and Bad Neighbors: North Korea Policymaking in Japan and Implications for the United States," pp. 24-28; Patricia G. Steinhoff, "Political Ties of Visible (Right) and Invisible (Left) Social Movements in Contemporary Japan."

¹⁵¹ James L. Schoff, "Political Fences and Bad Neighbors: North Korea Policymaking in Japan and Implications for the United States."

unrelenting push on the issue would carry him to his next post as head of the LDP. The North Korea abductions issue, coming at exactly the right place and time for the harder-line faction of the LDP, indeed proved a large component of the LDP's successful November 2003 election policy platform. When the six-party talks began, a system was already in place wherein the prime minister and chief cabinet secretary vetted MOFA's statement drafts for the meetings, thus ensuring that six-party tactics clearly included the LDP line on North Korea.¹⁵²

Thus, the issue was able to quickly make the long journey from a grass-roots, civil society issue to being effectively institutionalized within Japan's international policymaking structure – and thereby cemented into place as a paramount concern at the six-party talks.

3. Russia

a. Strategic Approaches within the Six-party Process

Russia has employed a strategy of engagement throughout the talks – though one marked by its balancing (along with China) against the positions of the United States and Japan.

In the few years prior to the six-party talks, Vladimir Putin essentially reinvented modern Russian relations with North Korea. Having fallen into total neglect under the Western-leaning governments of post-Soviet Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, and with economic cooperation from the DPRK's historically largest aid donor down to a trickle, Putin moved quickly to pick up the pieces. He visited Kim Jong-il in Pyongyang in 2000, being the first Russian or Soviet leader to do so. Kim reciprocated with visits to Russia in 2001 and 2002. Also in 2002, Putin resigned a new version of the Russia-DPRK friendship treaty that was first signed in 1961 and which the Yeltsin government allowed to expire in 1996. When the second nuclear crisis broke, Moscow in January 2003 offered Pyongyang the so-called "package proposal" a step-by-step deal that would bring Russian hydroelectric power to the North in exchange for denuclearization. The proposal never made it into the six-party negotiations due to the dominant U.S. push for CVID.

But Russia was not ignorant of the threat North Korea posed to its interests. In July 2003, just before the talks began, however, Russian officials evaluated military preparedness in the Far East for a worst-case scenario - and rumors even circulated in the Russian press that the United States and Russia had discussed plans for a pre-emptive strike on North Korea's nuclear

¹⁵² Schoff, *Ibid.*

facilities, a move interpreted as a calculated leak by Moscow designed to exert pressure on North Korea to inform an increasingly belligerent North of its limits vis-a-vis Moscow.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, it was the dynamic of renewed diplomatic relations between the two countries that influenced Kim Jong-il in 2003 to invite Russia to become the sixth member of the proposed five-party talks. At the talks, Moscow has indeed acted as the buffer against U.S. strategies, as North Korea hoped it would, at the second round endorsing Chinese negotiators' rebuffed drive for a joint statement, and during the second and third rounds pushing United States negotiators to include energy aid in any package deal with the North.¹⁵⁴ In addition, Russian negotiators, along with their Chinese counterparts, long resisted the drive by U.S. and Japanese negotiators to bring North Korea in front of the UN Security Council, and then when Security Council actions were inevitable following the North's missile and nuclear tests, Russian (along with Chinese) negotiators insisted that the UNSC drafts be edited to remove the possibility of use of force.

While it has balanced against harder-line U.S. and Japanese strategies, Russia has not been an apologist for North Korea's behavior. Just after the second round had resulted in no agreement despite the South Korean negotiators' three-step proposal (see "South Korea" section, below), Russia's ambassador to Seoul, Teymaruz Ramishvili, offered the observation that "four countries are ready to make a deal. Two countries are not," referring to the United States and North Korea. "When those two countries are ready, there will be a basis for negotiations," he continued.¹⁵⁵

In May 2004, between the second and third rounds of the six-party talks, Russia joined the PSI, but largely due to danger from former Soviet republics than as a means to pressure North Korea. Following the nuclear test, Russian UN representative Vitaly Churkin declined to clarify whether Moscow would support sanctions on North Korea.¹⁵⁶ After the October 2006 UNSC resolution, Russian negotiators expressed that they imagined an easier path than did their U.S. counterparts for North Korea to get the sanctions lifted.

After the BDA sanctions were lifted but North Korea was still refusing to come to the talks because it was having trouble accessing its money, Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyukov was quoted as saying "There won't be any progress until the North Korean side says that it has received the money." Losyukov continued, "We must be talking not now about deadlines, but the fulfillment of all agreements," referring to the United States' failure to easily

¹⁵³ Seung-ho Joo, "Russia and North Korea, 1992-2006: From Distant Allies to Normal Neighbors," *Korea Observer*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Spring 2007).

¹⁵⁴ Gilbert Rozman, *Strategic Thinking about the Korean Nuclear Crisis*, pp. 209-212.

¹⁵⁵ "Heads of China, N. Korea Meet Quietly in Beijing," *The Los Angeles Times*, April 20, 2004.

¹⁵⁶ "Bush Rebukes North Korea; U.S. Seeks New U.N. Sanctions," *The New York Times*, October 10, 2006.

free up the funds.¹⁵⁷ In the end, it would be a Russian bank that played a pivotal role in the resolution of the BDA issue, allowing itself to be the intermediary institution that transferred the suspect funds from BDA into an accessible North Korean account.

In early 2007, just before the February 13, 2007 agreement was reached, Moscow stepped up talks on possible forgiveness of a substantial portion of North Korea's \$8 million debt accrued during the Soviet era, a move some journalists and policy analysts saw as a possible incentive in order to encourage North Korea to come to a solid compromise at the six-party talks.¹⁵⁸

In addition, throughout the talks, Russian negotiators have offered security guarantees to both North and South Korea.

Strategy: Russia's strategic approach to the six-party talks saw little variance throughout. This is no doubt due in part to the Russian negotiators' minor role in the proceedings, overshadowed by the debate between the U.S. and North Korean sides, and the more prominent outspokenness of the Chinese and Japanese sides. The general strategy the Russian team has employed throughout is one of engagement, offering no pressure tactics or clear red lines of their own, and (along with China) ensuring that the two 2006 UNSC resolutions did not include the possibility of the use of force. Interestingly, policymakers in Moscow have also set up increased economic openness with the Russian Far East on the part of North Korea as a green line, rather than an incentive. Russia seems to be indeed attempting to "socialize" North Korea into entering the international community, particularly in terms of economic interaction.

| Approaches/ Strategems | Red Line(s) | Green Line(s) | Incentives and Pressure Tactics |
|--|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Throughout: Restrained balancing against U.S. stance | Throughout: Unclear | Throughout: Increased economic access/ opportunities | Sticks: None Carrots: Possible debt forgiveness |

¹⁵⁷ "Reports: Russian Diplomat Blames U.S. for Stalemate on North Korea's Nuclear Bid," *The Associated Press*, April 16, 2007.

¹⁵⁸ "North Korea-Russian Relations: A Strained Friendship," International Crisis Group, December 4, 2007.

b. Analysis of State Approach

In analyzing Russia's six-party strategy, realist concerns hold strong explanatory power – though ones related to Russian policymakers' plans to regain Russia's economic and political standing in the region than to North Korea's nuclear threat. In contrast, the centralized nature of international policymaking coupled with a lack of state-society pressures regarding DPRK strategy choice renders the explanatory power of domestic political institutions minimal. Finally, Russian national identity offers some explanatory power, but rather than its former Communist ties with the DPRK, this driver stems from Russia's historical memory as a great regional power which, in turn, leads it to choose tactics at the negotiations that counter U.S. and Japanese interests.

i. Realist Concerns

For Russia, security concerns stemming from the North Korea threat are not a major factor in its strategies within the six-party talks. Instead, we see a drive to balance against U.S. regional hegemony, as well as its offering of incentives to North Korea in the form of economic opportunities. These strategies are related to Russia's realist quest to regain its status as an economic and political power in the region, as well as its focus on internal balancing against other would-be challengers via economic buildup.

The security concerns Russia faces vis-à-vis a rise in North Korean offensive capabilities are not as high as the countries' shared border would suggest. The Russian Far East, while within DPRK missile range, has an extremely low population as compared to Russia's western territories. In addition, North Korean foreign policymakers brought Russia into the talks with the hopes that its negotiators would act as balancers on behalf of DPRK interests – a sign that Russia does not stand to directly face the brunt of North Korea's increased military capabilities.

This relatively low level of threat has allowed Russian negotiators at the six-party talks to avoid having the North Korean security issue drive their strategy. They have set no clear red or green lines regarding the DPRK threat. Instead, through their strategy of engagement with the North, Russia's negotiators have acted as external balancers (alongside their Chinese counterparts) against the United States team, pushing up against Washington's wishes to take a harder-line stance on North Korea. This drive to remind the United States that there exist alternative regional preferences is related to Russia's drive to (again) build great-power status in

Northeast Asia – also an approach to the six-party format similar to that of China.¹⁵⁹

Second, through its six-party strategy, Russia is practicing internal balancing, as well, by seeking economic opportunity through railway link proposals and energy provision deals. However, this is also not directed toward the North Korea threat. Instead, these tactics seem to stem from Moscow's mercantilist leanings aimed at significantly bettering its economic status, another realist calculation.

Third, instead of being concerned regarding North Korea's relative economic gain, Moscow has offered Pyongyang incentives in exchange for increased economic access and cooperation on projects, such as linking the Trans-Siberian Railroad to Seoul. Because all of Russia's gas needs to be exported westward, a North Korean rail link would offer the most expedient route to bringing gas and/or oil to the large energy markets of South Korea and Japan.¹⁶⁰ It is therefore in Russia's best interest to keep relations friendly with North Korea. Indeed, Moscow has used these substantial oil reserves as leverage to play China and Japan off of one another as well as to boost its economy in its quest for more power.¹⁶¹

Overall, Russia's aim for better economic conditions and influence in the region signals a desire to increase its relative power. Thus, Russia's six-party strategy can be explained through realist concerns, even though the threat from North Korea is not high in Russia's calculus.

ii. Domestic Political Institutions

In terms of the influence of domestic political institutions on the strategies Moscow has brought to the six-party talks, the centralized nature of international policymaking means that those in charge of making DPRK policy do not face internal bureaucratic pressures to select a certain approach to the North Korea issue. In addition, North Korea's lack of viable economic markets means that the business community does not pressure the government to alter its relations with North Korea. Furthermore, Moscow policymakers' lack of pressure to meet the economic concerns of the Far East Region that borders on North Korea renders state-society effects on DPRK policymaking minimal. In short, domestic political institutions do not factor heavily into Moscow's strategy at the six-party talks.

Russia's domestic political setup is strongly centralized, both in terms of party and policy

¹⁵⁹ Seung-ho Joo, "Russia and North Korea, 1992-2006: From Distant Allies to Normal Neighbors."

¹⁶⁰ "North Korea-Russian Relations: A Strained Friendship."

¹⁶¹ John S. Park, "Inside Multilateralism: The Six-party Talks."

decision-making. There exists little competition between political parties or policymaking bodies within government that might try to hijack the decisions on strategy at the six-party talks. Instead, Vladimir Putin has been behind most of the major decisions on DPRK policy throughout the talks.¹⁶²

In addition, North Korea's utter lack of regulated financial markets and capital and its balking at undertaking economic reforms mean there are no powerful Russian investors or businesses pressing the Kremlin on opening up exchange with North Korea, and in turn the Kremlin does not pressure the Foreign Ministry on the North Korea issue, relegating it to the backburner in terms of international strategic priorities.¹⁶³

In terms of state-society relations that might affect North Korea strategy at the six-party talks, the most likely candidate would be potential pressure on Moscow from politicians or citizens in the Russian Far East seeking stimulus packages for the economically stagnated region. However, policymakers in Moscow mainly seek to remove Chinese influence from the Far East, representing a drive to retain territorial sovereignty rather than one aimed at improving economic conditions for the citizens there. For example, when Moscow expelled a number of Chinese merchants from the Russian Far East, the Russian citizens living there did not benefit but in fact suffered due to the sudden lack of affordable versions of certain goods. Overall, Moscow's centralized structure also eliminates any potential for societal pressure regarding North Korea policy.¹⁶⁴

Thus, we do not see domestic political institutions pulling Russia's strategy at the six-party talks in unexpected directions given empirical factors. This is due to the strong centralization of the Putin government regarding decisions of international policy, as well as the lack of pressure on the North Korea issue, either from businesses wishing to work with North Korea (due to a lack of interest) or from citizens in the Far East (due to a lack of representation).

iii. National Identity

Though the modern Russian state is no stranger to the use of force, it has practiced an engagement strategy with North Korea throughout the six-party talks. In addition, Moscow has shed any shared Cold War-era amity for North Korea for a more pragmatic strategy, seen in its

¹⁶² Yoshinori Takeda, "Putin's Foreign Policy toward North Korea," *International Relations of the Asia Pacific*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (2006), pp. 191-193.

¹⁶³ "North Korea-Russian Relations: A Strained Friendship."

¹⁶⁴ Author interviews, Oleg Kiriyakov, professor of political science, and Olga Maltsova, professor of journalism, Vladivostok State University, Vladivostok, April 2007.

willingness to join the other six-party nations in condemning North Korea's behavior. However, much like China, Russia's memory as a great power in the region has influenced it to choose strategies that balance against U.S. and Japanese preferences in the six-party format.

Today's Russian policymakers and leaders are not afraid of the use of coercive measures up to and including military force in order to protect state interests, including territorial integrity and internal and external security. However, these norms regarding the use of force are not borne out by Russia's strategies seen at the six-party talks. Instead, Russia has brought a consistent engagement policy to the proceedings, despite North Korea's increase in offensive capability with its development of nuclear weapons.

In terms of historical memory, the communist legacies of Russia and North Korea bear little influence on strategy. For Russia, like China, while practicing an overall strategy of engagement, has nonetheless been willing to bring harsh words and UNSC resolutions to bear on North Korea rather than holding onto any legacy left over from a possible bond based on shared ideological experience. This pragmatic approach toward relations with North Korea began in the 1970s, when Soviet leaders viewed the DPRK as a buffer with China rather than as a reliable ally, and carried through to Russia's 1990 normalization of relations with Seoul, much to the anger of North Korea.¹⁶⁵

More influential in this category is Russia's historical memory as a great power. Russian politicians, Putin among them, often invoke the history of Russia's being a great regional power that then endured an extremely rough transition from a communist system to a market-based one, a shift that resulted in severe losses in the realms of economic and geopolitical clout.¹⁶⁶ However, while Putin charted an initial drive to "reclaim" East Asian allies lost during his country's Westward turn under Gorbachev and Yeltsin, these are not attempts to rebuild the past. This aim for increased influence in region is a goal only inasmuch as it means a return to its status as influential global diplomatic power, more realist concerns than related to an attempt to reassert it itself in areas where it traditionally held influence.¹⁶⁷ This is manifest in Russia's external balancing against U.S. and Japanese strategies during the negotiations. Thus, while issues of national identity are somewhat present in this strategy, such balancing is more strongly explained via realist calculus.

There is thus little to suggest that national identity is driving Russian policymakers' choice of strategy at the six-party talks, as the drive to regain regional clout in the economic and

¹⁶⁵ Samuel S. Kim, "Russia and North Korea," Columbia University Web site.

¹⁶⁶ Yoshinori Takeda, "Putin's Foreign Policy toward North Korea."

¹⁶⁷ Yoshinori Takeda, *Ibid.*

political realms and balance against U.S. interests in the process simultaneously holds strong links to Russia's realist concerns toward reclaiming great power status.

In examining possible drivers of its six-party strategy, Russia's realist calculus, while based on its desire to rise as a regional power rather than on containing the North Korea threat, factors the strongest in explaining its strategic choices at the six-party talks, rather than issues stemming from domestic politics or national identity, as our hypothesis would predict.

Given the findings of the analysis, we therefore **reject** the hypothesis in the case of Russia – though there are two caveats worthy of mention. The first is that the factor of national identity plays a limited but present role in explaining Russia's strategic calculus, as well, due to its history as a great power. The second is that although realist concerns prevail in the findings for Russia, the North Korea threat is not prime among its concerns; rather, just as in the case of China, Russia is more interested in a realist balancing against other regional hegemonies, namely the United States and Japan, takes precedence.

c. Origin Trace of the Strongest Explanatory Factor

[Realist Concerns]

Despite its limited economic and diplomatic influence within the six-party talks, why would Russia's strategies be realist in nature, deriving from its desire for great-power status? Russia is indeed pursuing goals primarily linked to international structural concerns rather than more regionally-based power or security concerns. Given this, Moscow's external balancing against U.S. harder-line tactical strategies during the six-party talks can be framed in the context of recent geopolitical structural shifts.

Following the fall of the Soviet Union, the pro-West administrations of Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin left North Korea behind in favor of strategic economic relations with the wealthier South.¹⁶⁸ When Vladimir Putin became acting president in 1999 and then president the following year, he unveiled Russia's 2000 national security and foreign policy blueprints, which represented an expansive grand strategy aimed at regaining its status as a global

¹⁶⁸ "North Korea-Russian Relations: A Strained Friendship."

power. In Putin's words, "in the foreseeable future, Russia will firmly take its place among the truly strong, economically advanced and influential states of the world."¹⁶⁹

At the core of Moscow's international agenda are the concepts of balance of power and spheres of influence, notions derived from territorial expansionism in Russian and Soviet history, now coupled with an increased emphasis on economic interests.¹⁷⁰ In this manner, Russia seeks to make its presence in East Asia felt via the six-party process, particularly in light of the fact that the United States is far from welcoming its reemergence in international affairs.¹⁷¹ One manifestation of this is Russia's offers of security guarantees to both North *and* South Korea.

Within this larger plan, Moscow's policymakers included a drive to increase engagement with former Cold War allies, which resulted in two high-profile visits between Putin and Kim in the years prior to the second North Korean nuclear crisis.

But another reason for the shift 'Eastward' in Moscow comes down to the bottom line: Russia was seeing meager economic rewards in its courting of the West and of South Korea, the latter which had invested far less in Russia than it had promised upon diplomatic normalization between Seoul and Moscow.¹⁷² Pipeline and railroad link talks with North Korea have no basis in aid-based funding, as Moscow has made it clear that it will not fund such ventures. Thus, their possible execution rests upon potential for market-based economic gain.¹⁷³ It would indeed seem that Moscow is interested in a wholly pragmatic approach to its geopolitical interests.

In sum, Russia's aims as seen via the six-party talks, while muted, are "purely pragmatic," as it is using relations with North Korea to help further economic projects while at the same time attempting to bring Russia back into major actor status in the Asia-Pacific.¹⁷⁴

4. South Korea

a. Strategic Approaches within the Six-party Process

Despite the rising nuclear power just across the border, South Korea's strategies during

¹⁶⁹ Pravda 2003, quoted in Yoshinori Takeda, "Putin's Foreign Policy toward North Korea."

¹⁷⁰ Yoshinori Takeda, "Putin's Foreign Policy toward North Korea," pp. 191-193.

¹⁷¹ Gilbert Rozman, *Strategic Thinking about the Korean Nuclear Crisis*.

¹⁷² "Russia-North Korea Relations: A Strained Friendship."

¹⁷³ Author interviews, Russian diplomat, Seoul, February 2007.

¹⁷⁴ James Clay Moltz and C. Kenneth Quinones, "Getting Serious about a Multilateral Approach to North Korea," *The Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring 2004).

the six-party process have stayed firmly focused upon engagement, including heavy amounts of aid and economic incentives.

In 2002, as the second DPRK nuclear crisis unfolded, Roh Moo-hyun campaigned on a platform of a peaceful resolution to the issue, a pledge to continue Kim Dae-jung's Sunshine Policy, and a more equal relationship with the United States, with his campaign at times courting anti-U.S. sentiments. In his February 25, 2003 inaugural address, Roh unveiled his so-called "Peace and Prosperity Policy." It included DPRK policymaking "on the premise that South and North Korea are the two main actors in inter-Korean relations."¹⁷⁵

The newly incumbent Roh's visit to the White House in May 2003 would set the tone for the divide between South Korean and U.S. approaches to the six-party process. Roh attempted to get Bush to agree to dialogue, whereas Bush tried to get Roh to agree to pressure the North.¹⁷⁶ Early in 2003, responding to the U.S. increase of military forces in the region due to the nuclear crisis, Roh told a trade union audience that "Koreans should stand together, although things will get difficult when the United States bosses us around."¹⁷⁷

During the first and second rounds, South Korean negotiators tried to assert their country's position at the talks by suggesting possible solutions, largely based on aid, energy, and confidence-building measures. The three-stage proposal offered by the ROK negotiating team during the second round seemed to be an attempt to meet North Korea halfway. It began with an agreement from North Korea to be willing to give up its nuclear program, which would be met with agreement from Washington to provide security assurances; next, North Korea's verified freeze of nuclear activity that would be met with energy aid, and a final step of verified elimination of the program.¹⁷⁸ U.S. negotiators rejected the proposal, insistent on CVID. Showing his displeasure, President Roh in a televised speech in March 2004 that "step by step we should strengthen our independence and build our strength as an independent nation."¹⁷⁹ Two days later, Roh rejected the tactic of pressuring the North, saying that engagement was a more favorable strategy for South Korea.¹⁸⁰

By the third round, South Korean negotiators were more directly assertive, presenting a rival proposal to the one offered by the U.S. negotiating team, the South Korean offer being more

¹⁷⁵ Quoted in Scott Snyder, "South Korea Squeeze Play," p. 96.

¹⁷⁶ "North Korea: Where Next for the Nuclear Talks?"

¹⁷⁷ "U.S. Approach on North Korea is Straining Alliances in Asia," *The New York Times*, February 24, 2003.

¹⁷⁸ "North Korea: Where Next for the Nuclear Talks?"

¹⁷⁹ "Cheney Makes Clear U.S. Is Not Willing to Bend on North Korea," *Los Angeles Times*, April 16, 2004.

¹⁸⁰ Leon Sigal, "Misplaying North Korea and Losing Friends and Influence in Northeast Asia."

flexible regarding issues of timing and tit-for-tat offers. Following this flexibility, the 2004 ROK National Security Strategy emphasizes resolution of all peninsular issues through peaceful dialogue – no other options are even suggested, in contrast to the then-current U.S. NSS, which suggested preemption. The ROK NSS also went on to state that the South and North are the two parties directly concerned with this resolution.¹⁸¹

Between the third and fourth rounds, Roh gave a speech in Los Angeles on November 12, 2004 in which he said that, given the security environment the North faced, it was “understandable” for Pyongyang to develop nuclear weapons. During the 13-month hiatus between the third and fourth rounds, South Korean officials offered a proposal to supply the North with 2 million kilowatts of electricity – almost the total electrical consumption of the DPRK at that time – in exchange for the North abandoning its nuclear programs. Seoul officials also offered 500,000 tons of rice as food aid to the North as a goodwill gesture.¹⁸²

When the fourth round of talks began on in July 2005, the South Korean team furthered the step-by-step concept by coining the phrase, “word-for-word, action-for-action,” again suggesting that Seoul did not agree with the U.S. insistence on CVID.¹⁸³ In the September 19, 2005 Joint Statement, the South Korean negotiators also reiterated their stance to provide 2 million kilowatts of electricity in exchange for the North’s denuclearization.

After Christopher Hill announced the U.S. Treasury Department’s sanctions on North Korean funds following the September 19 agreement, South Korea’s ambassador to the talks, Chun Youngwoo, said that North Korea was being “besieged, squeezed, strangled and cornered by hostile powers” and that the talks had suffered from “condescension, self-righteousness” and a “vindictive approach” on the part of parties he left unnamed – clearly the United States.¹⁸⁴ A December 2005 South Korean Blue House paper called for separating aid from the six-party talks and praised China’s stance throughout the proceedings.¹⁸⁵

After North Korea’s nuclear test, the South Korean Ministry of Foreign affairs reserved its displeasure for Japan’s strong reaction rather than the test itself, save for lukewarm official

¹⁸¹ United States National Security Strategy, September 2002 (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf>); “Korean National Security Council, Peace, Prosperity and National Security: National Security Strategy of the Republic of Korea,” May 2004 (http://www.korea.net/kois/eng_il_read.asp?book_no=15).

¹⁸² James Cotton, “North Korea and the Six-party Process: Is a Multilateral Resolution of the Nuclear Issue Still Possible?” pp. 31-33.

¹⁸³ James Cotton, “North Korea and the Six-party Process: Is a Multilateral Resolution of the Nuclear Issue Still Possible?” p. 32.

¹⁸⁴ Gavin McCormack, “A Denuclearization Deal in Beijing: The Prospect of Ending the 20th Century in East Asia,” Japan Focus, February 14, 2007.

¹⁸⁵ James Cotton, “North Korea and the Six-party Process: Is a Multilateral Resolution of the Nuclear Issue Still Possible?” p. 34.

statements.¹⁸⁶ The subsequent UNSC resolution provided the Roh administration with a major headache, for now that the Security Council had resolved that the DPRK's conduct was a matter infringing "international peace and security," Seoul's position of engagement and reconciliation had been undermined.¹⁸⁷ However, the South went along with the UNSC resolution, though doing as minimal amount as it could under the terms of the resolution: Seoul delayed the resumption of inter-Korean ministerial talks until after the Feb 13 agreement, and withheld 400,000 tons of rice aid until the Feb 13 agreement was implemented. It also made clear that its normal economic activities with the North would not be affected.¹⁸⁸ When the February 13, 2007 agreement was struck, South Korean negotiators agreed to be sole provider of the initial 50,000 tons of fuel aid. After the February 13 agreement, allegations surfaced that Seoul officials had pledged additional aid to North Korea in a back-door deal. South Korean negotiators also pledged 400,000 tons of rice on April 22, despite the fact that the North had missed the deadline upon which food aid was contingent, per the February 13 agreement.¹⁸⁹ In addition to providing aid, the South Korean government has joined up with major national conglomerates to help fund two large-scale economic cooperation projects with the North. The first is the Kaesong Industrial Complex, located 30 minutes north of the DMZ and begun in March 2005, with the South Korean factories operating there paying North Korean workers a set wage garnished by the DPRK government. The other major inter-Korean economic project is the Mount Kumgang tourist resort, located in the two countries' eastern Gangwon Province over the North Korean border. South Korea has also pressed for the restoration of rail links between the two countries, severed since the Korean War. The railroad saw its first test in spring of 2007.

Overall, South Korea's strategy has thus both directly and indirectly involved a number of aid packages and economic development projects.

Strategy: South Korea's strategy at the six-party talks, like Russia's, has seen little movement away from engagement. South Korean negotiators remained extremely reluctant to even mention the possibility of any substantive sanctions or pressure tactics, a reflection of the policymaking environment toward Pyongyang in Seoul in general during the Kim Dae-jung and

¹⁸⁶ "Parties See Internal Splits after North's Test," *Hankyoreh Shinmun*, October 20, 2006.

¹⁸⁷ James Cotton, "North Korea and the Six-party Process: Is a Multilateral Resolution of the Nuclear Issue Still Possible?", pp. 33.

¹⁸⁸ "China May Be Using Oil to Press North Korea," *The New York Times*, October 31, 2006.

¹⁸⁹ "After the North Korea Nuclear Breakthrough: Compliance or Confrontation?" International Crisis Group, April 30, 2007.

Roh Moo-hyun presidencies. Though the South Korean government – like that of all five parties negotiating with the DPRK – has officially said a nuclear North Korea would not be acceptable, policymakers and negotiators have been very vague about specifying related red lines and introducing the possibility of sanctions should the North cross them. Indeed, though South Korea is the most geographically proximate country, and has a history of North Korea as a bitter enemy in war and Cold War tensions, South Korea elicited the most muted reaction to the North's nuclear test. Its continued incentives for the green lines of increased cooperation and better relations from the North suggests it is trying to "socialize" North Korea – though perhaps not in terms of its threat but rather its isolation from the international community, especially from its "brother" to the South.

| Approaches/Strategems | Red Line(s) | Green Line(s) | Incentives and Pressure Tactics |
|---|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Throughout: Proposing step-by-step, tit-for-tat initiatives; Promoting economic cooperation; Incentives only | Throughout: Left undrawn | Throughout: Warmer relations from Pyongyang, greater support for economic cooperation projects, more separated-family reunions | Carrots: Aid and economic cooperation (constant) Sticks: None |

b. Analysis of State Approach

In analyzing South Korea's six-party strategy, realist concerns do not hold strong explanatory power – a seemingly contradictory stance, given South Korea's alliance with the United States, its proximity to the North, and the bitterness of the two Koreas' belligerent history. While domestic institutions do offer some explanatory power regarding Seoul's negotiation strategies, due to a strong executive with a president capable of 'stacking the deck' with policymakers sharing his political beliefs, the variable with the most explanatory capability is national identity, with South Korea's ideological pendulum "swinging back" toward a policy of engagement with the North after decades of military rulers that based their power on portraying the DPRK security threat as South Korea's primary concern.

i. Realist Concerns

South Korea's strategy of engagement and unconditional aid – despite an increased

threat from North Korea – runs counter to what we would expect to see in South Korean tactics at the talks, which would entail drawing closer to its alliance with the United States and coordinating a balancing strategy, along with attempting to cut off the North's economic lines. While North Korea's threat is certainly physically real for South Korea, it does not factor high in driving Seoul's negotiation policy at the six-party talks.

For South Korea, the empirical security threat from North Korea is very high. The on-the-ground security situation continues to be very volatile, with the two Koreas' militaries engaging in several fatal exchanges over the past several years. In addition, North Korea continues its bellicose rhetoric toward the South through its national news service. South Korea remains heavily militarized, with a two-year mandatory conscription for males and 28,000 U.S. troops currently stationed there, as well. In fact, the two countries are still technically at war, having signed an armistice rather than a peace treaty. North Korea's development of nuclear weapons has thus greatly worsened an already volatile security situation. Yet, despite these objective factors, we see little of South Korea's strategy at the six-party talks related to security concerns.

In terms of balancing behavior and alliances to counter this threat, South Korea maintains a military alliance with the United States, forged during the 1950-53 Korean War. However, during the six-party process, South Korean negotiators have been completely unwilling to bring their strategies to any agreement with those of the U.S. side, sticking instead to a strategy purely of engagement. In addition, South Korean negotiators have used virtually no pressure tactics against the North on issues of security. While publicly speaking out against North Korea's drive for nuclear weapons, South Korean policymakers and negotiators alike have been vague about setting related red lines or threatening possible sanctions. Their reaction to the missile and nuclear tests was among the most muted of the five negotiating parties.

Most notably, as for concerns regarding relative economic gain, despite the threat offered by the North, South Korean policymakers have not actively blocked North Korean economic activity; on the contrary, they have been the second-largest aid donors after China, and have set up several high-profile inter-Korean economic exchange programs.¹⁹⁰

In sum, realist concerns bear little influence on South Korea's range of strategies seen at the six-party talks, as on the part of the ROK, we see almost no responding to security threats, balancing behavior, or concern over economic gain vis-à-vis the rising North Korea threat.

¹⁹⁰ "After the North Korea Nuclear Breakthrough: Compliance or Confrontation?"

ii. Domestic Political Institutions

South Korean domestic politics bear some explanatory capability regarding South Korea's six-party strategy, due to the country's strong executive and the president's ability to select policymakers based on his own political and ideological criteria, as well as a shift in state-civil society interaction that has opened up discourse on North-South relations.

In the case of South Korean domestic politics, a superficial split exists in the North Korea policymaking structure between the more hard-line Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT), which has greater contact with the U.S. and South Korean military establishments, and the Ministry of Unification, which has greater ties with the Roh Moo-hyun Cabinet and affiliated lawmakers in the National Assembly.¹⁹¹ Fittingly, the Ministry of Unification largely helps coordinate the Mt. Kumgang tourism project and the Kaesong Industrial Complex, which have come under fire from both MOFAT and Washington for helping keep Pyongyang (and perhaps its nuclear program) afloat.¹⁹² However, despite this split, which might suggest competition regarding which strategy to take at the negotiations, a strong, hand-picked executive under Roh has allowed his policy of engagement on North Korea to stick. This is the result of Roh granting a substantial amount of power to the secretariat surrounding the presidential office, making it responsible for screening information and controlling policy output. Since the secretariat is appointed by the president, Roh has been able to "stack the deck" with former lawyers and those with his own political ideology toward reconciliation with the North.¹⁹³ This structural setup has allowed Roh to pursue his preferred engagement strategy with North Korea at the six-party talks, despite the heightened security threat.

State-civil society relations also play a part in South Korea's strategy at the six-party talks. Following Korea's 1987 democratization, 1992 saw the election of the first opposition candidate, Kim Young-sam, followed by fellow opposition candidates Kim Dae-jung in 1997 and Roh Moo-hyun in 2002. All three had fought against the dictatorial governments, and all three helped open up the space for a freer press and the ability of civil society organizations to speak openly about reconciliation with North Korea, a topic that had been taboo during the military dictatorships and punishable under the National Security Law.¹⁹⁴ With this new space of

¹⁹¹ "After the North Korea Nuclear Breakthrough: Compliance or Confrontation?"

¹⁹² Lee Chi-dong, "U.S. envoy criticizes inter-Korean tourism project," *Yonhap*, 17 October 2006.

¹⁹³ Bruce Bechtol, "Civil-Military Relations in the Republic of Korea: Background and Implications," *Korea Observer*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Winter 2005), pp. 603-607.

¹⁹⁴ Sunhyuk Kim, "State and Civil Society in South Korea's Democratic Consolidation," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 37, No. 12, December 1997.

discourse opened, pro-reconciliation interest groups – such as the large group of separated-family survivors seeking to be reunited with their family members living in the north – were able to press government and politicians for increased dialogue with North Korea. It is this same sector of civil society from which Roh drew his policymaking team, especially his reunification ministers, who were given a great deal of clout in the executive.¹⁹⁵

Therefore, looking at domestic political institutions in South Korea adds insight into understanding South Korea's six-party strategy. This includes a strong executive selected by the president, as well as shifting state-civil society relations that allow for the discussion of reconciliation with North Korea, once deemed illegal by the government.

iii. National Identity

While South Korea's lack of norms condemning or restraining the use of force seem to contradict its engagement strategy with the North, the ROK's historical memory, based on its status as a divided nation as well as factors related to its experience moving from military dictatorship to democracy, figures strongly in explaining its strategic choices at the six-party talks.

South Korea does not hold normative restraints regarding the use of force – it maintains a strongly militarized culture, participated in a brutal civil war, sent 300,000 troops to join U.S. efforts in Vietnam, sent peacekeeping troops to Iraq and Afghanistan, and has seen several recent fatal naval skirmishes and gun battles with North Korean soldiers.¹⁹⁶ However, the strategy that South Korea has employed toward the North in the six-party talks – one of nearly unconditional engagement – does not map onto these norms.

Holding greater explanatory power in terms of national identity is South Korea's historical legacy. Aspects of South Korea's history that shape its national identity include its memory of the 1910-45 colonial period under Japan, its division into two, and the experience of dictatorship that followed.

First, South Korea's reactions to the missile and nuclear tests – anger seemed more aimed at Japan's strong reaction than at North Korea – is a telling reminder of the bitterness and competition South Korea feels against Japan as a product of their historical legacy.

Second, South Korea's historical memory and identity as one half of a divided nation

¹⁹⁵ Bruce Bechtol, "Civil-Military Relations in the Republic of Korea: Background and Implications."

¹⁹⁶ "South Koreans Atone for Vietnam War," *BBC*, January 21, 2003.

helps explain why it has not moved to ally with U.S. strategy during the talks. The same 2004 South Korean National Security Strategy mentioned above, which underscores the importance of the South Korea-U.S. military alliance, also contradictorily states Seoul's desire to gain military autonomy from Washington, which still has operational command during wartime, ceded during the Korean War. While fear of U.S. abandonment or entanglement given the U.S. military's global posture changes and strategic flexibility doctrine most likely factors in, as well, this quest for autonomy on the part of South Korea can also be explained through a strong desire to "regain control" of its own destiny based on its identity as a 'nation divided.' In addition to Seoul's six-party posturing away from the United States, this aspect of its national identity is also manifest in burgeoning nationalism and incremental street rallies calling for increased distance from the U.S. military.¹⁹⁷

The final component of historical memory that affects six-party strategy is South Korea's recent political shift to democracy from the military regimes that ruled during the 1960s through the late 1980s. South Korea's dictatorships propped themselves up on a platform of "total security," citing the North Korea threat; even South Korea's rapid economic development was framed in pure realist terms as a means of increasing security.¹⁹⁸ Flash forward to the present, in which the security situation has not substantially changed – yet the South is offering substantial aid and economic incentives to its once-sworn enemy. This is due to the embrace of a people-led democracy movement that seeks to distance itself from the security-based military governments of the past, and has led a societal shift that has seen the election of opposition politicians Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun, who both carried a policy of engagement policies with North Korea – the policies that in turn drive South Korea's strategy at the six-party negotiations.

Thus, in terms of aspects of South Korea's national identity, South Korea's norms on the use of force do not seem related to the tactics its negotiators have presented at the six-party talks. However, South Korea's strategy seen at the talks seems to have much to do with its historical experience – of being a divided country, at first under military rule that required the North Korea threat for its own survival, and then under democratic regimes that sought to right the wrongs of those years.

¹⁹⁷ Moon, Chung-in. "South Korea: Recasting Security Paradigms," in *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences*, Muthiah Alagappa, ed. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.

¹⁹⁸ Moon, Chung-in. "South Korea: Recasting Security Paradigms."

In examining possible drivers of its six-party strategy, as predicted by our hypothesis, rather than realist terms, South Korea's national identity, based on its status as a divided nation as well as its experience moving from military dictatorships to democracy, factors the strongest in explaining its strategic choices at the six-party talks. In addition, domestic political institutions hold explanatory power, due to South Korea's strong executive and its president's ability to select policymakers based on his own political and ideological criteria, as well as the opening up of state-civil society relations, allowing for discourse on reconciliation with North Korea.

Given the findings of the analysis, we **do not reject** the hypothesis in the case of South Korea.

c. Origin Trace of the Strongest Explanatory Factors

[National Identity/Domestic Political Institutions]

Although our hypothesis predicts that South Korea's small military and economic size would deem it less concerned about structural power shifts, its situation is a unique one: its capital sits roughly 30 miles from the demilitarized zone dividing it from North Korea, with which it is still technically at war. Given this, we might expect security concerns to at least somewhat factor into South Korea's negotiation strategy toward the North. Instead, why would national identity and domestic politics figure so heavily in ROK strategies at the six-party talks? The answer must therefore involve a fundamental shift in South Korea's threat perception vis-à-vis North Korea.

South Korea maintains a military alliance with the United States; however, the relationship is fraught with tension and growing resentment from a nationalistic South Korea desiring autonomy. Polls bear this out: a 2002 Munhwa Ilbo survey showed that 73 percent of Koreans surveyed thought that Bush's policy toward the North represented a major impediment to North-South reconciliation.¹⁹⁹ In addition, a 2003 JoongAng Ilbo/CSIS/RAND survey found that more South Koreans chose increased cooperation with North Korea (39 percent) than with

¹⁹⁹ Leon Sigal, "Misplaying North Korea and Losing Friends and Influence in Northeast Asia."

the United States (24 percent).²⁰⁰ A survey in January 2004 showed that South Koreans felt the United States to be a greater threat to their security than the North, with 39 percent saying they felt the United States the biggest threat and 33 percent selecting North Korea. Finally, a July 2004 Korea Times poll showed that more than 60 percent of South Koreans thought that aid to North Korea was acceptable and/or should increase.²⁰¹ In contrast, in 1993, only 1 percent of South Koreans chose the United States as the largest threat, with 44 percent selecting North Korea.²⁰²

So, why this strong move away from the U.S. alliance and toward a ‘softer’ perception of North Korea? I argue that it has to do with South Korean citizens’ experience under the military dictatorships that ruled South Korea with barely a pause from 1953 until 1987, and which were heavily reliant upon pushing the propagandistic image of North Korea as a belligerent, alien ideologue and number one security threat. However, I need to address why South Korea would shift from one perception of North Korea to its essential opposite. The answer would have to be a large-scale paradigm shift – one a major event most likely caused. Indeed, South Korea has just such an event in its history: the sudden and momentous democratization that transformed the nation in 1987.

Under the Park Chung-hee and subsequent Chun Doo-hwan dictatorships, harsh rhetoric against North Korea had been especially co-opted by the government in order to secure its power base. When these leaders were undermined with Korea’s move toward democratic rule, so, too, was what they stood for in popular thought, so that South Korea today is a society in which hard-line tactics are looked at suspiciously as attempts to roll back political reforms.²⁰³

But South Korea’s democratization had not one but two effects: not only did it undermine the previous governments’ portrayal of the North Korean regime, it also called into question their organization of society under the rubric of “total security.” In terms of this second effect, South Korea’s dictatorial governments had maintained a policy of “total security” – that is, the very role of economic development was to shore up security. Indeed, the military was the largest beneficiary of government resources during South Korea’s dictatorships, and Park Chung Hee’s huge push toward growth in the heavy-chemical industry was to produce forward and backward

²⁰⁰ “Strategy and Sentiment: South Korean Views of the United States and the ROK Alliance,” CSIS, June 2004.

²⁰¹ “Strategy and Sentiment: South Korean Views of the United States and the ROK Alliance,” CSIS, June 2004.

²⁰² *Chosun Ilbo*, Jan 12, 2004.

²⁰³ Thomas U. Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany and Japan*.

links to the defense industrial sector.²⁰⁴ South Korea's rapid industrialization and drive for "total security" required a subversion of any aspect of an active civil society, which was in turn linked to the state's strong anti-Communist identity and hard-line security stance. The state derived its very legitimacy from these two pillars – economic growth and state security – and the latter the ruling elites equated with regime security, themselves all military men having seized power via coup. At the same time, South Korea's democracy movement had been ongoing since the country's inception. It encompassed two conflicting conceptions of "democracy," the first a more moderate, procedurally-based understanding and the second a more radical notion referred to as the *minjung*, or "people" movement.²⁰⁵

The minjung movement's three main tenets were democracy (*minju heonbeop*), an end to exploitation of the people (*minjung haebang*), and the drive for reconciliation and peaceful reunification with the North (*minjok tongil*), the last especially taboo under the military regimes. When the push for democratization came to a head in 1980 and again in 1987, the fight was through the efforts of adherents to the minjung movement. When the authoritarian government was finally forced to allow open elections, the minjung conception thus gained immediate legitimacy over the more moderate notion of democracy. The result of democratization was that many years of civil society repression "exploded in the political space opened by the minjung movement."²⁰⁶ Because the now-delegitimized authoritarian regimes had bundled together regime security, economic growth, and repression of civil society, the anti-North Korea "total security" doctrine was thus subject to extreme scrutiny at the same time the minjung philosophy was given new stature, including the idea that North Korea should be treated as long-lost brother rather than bitter enemy.

Indeed, with the advent of democracy and a destabilization of the long-existing historical analogy and "total security" framework, the government removed the strictest tenets of the National Security Law, allowing for civil groups to emerge, eventually gaining societal influence on such previously popularly undiscussed notions as reconciliation with the North. Indeed, the change was not overnight – there was a transition period in which the stickiness of the prior view of North Korea can be seen: Fear of war has dropped not precipitously but steadily, with only 36

²⁰⁴ Woo-Cumings, Meredith Jung-En. "National Security and the Rise of the Developmental State in South Korea and Taiwan," in *Behind East Asian Growth*. Edited by Harry Rowen, ed. New York: Routledge, 1998.

²⁰⁵ Woo-Cumings, Meredith Jung-En. "National Security and the Rise of the Developmental State in South Korea and Taiwan."

²⁰⁶ Pak, Sejin. "Two Forces of Democratization in Korea." *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol. 28, No. 1. (1998), pp. 45-73.

percent of citizens considering a North Korean invasion possible when polled in 1990, down from 80 percent just after democratization in 1987.²⁰⁷ The Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun administrations have taken a notably different tack than the governments that came before them, all linked in some way to South Korea's militarist past. With engagement the mantra, the ROK abstained at a December 2005 UN vote to rebuke North Korea for its human rights record, including the abductions issue. As was documented above, Roh filled his administration with domestic human rights advocates and those formerly imprisoned under the military dictatorships.

However, the Roh camp has paid a political price for continuing this policy despite the North's recent actions, particularly as this camp has refused to yield to domestic political shifts back toward some sort of middle ground with the North. This perhaps represents a sign that the perception of North Korea has not seen a pendular swing to the opposite side as the perception held during South Korea's dictatorships. While in April 2003, 69 percent of citizens wanted continued engagement under the Sunshine policy, by the end of 2006 more than two-thirds of the country saw the need to revise the engagement policy. Yet still the Roh administration forged onward with economic engagement, only briefly stopping aid even after the North's nuclear test, and garnering harsh criticism both at home and abroad. Roh's approval ratings bottomed out as low as 14-15 percent in December 2006, before his term ended the next year.

The drive to settle the score based on the wages of the past may have played itself out for a public increasingly frustrated with a North Korea that receives aid unconditionally, as South Koreans in elected as president Lee Myung-bak, a conservative with a harder-line stance toward North Korea. In South Korea, it would seem, the ideological pendulum has not yet come to an even temporary rest regarding the North Korea issue.

5. The United States

a. Strategic Approaches within the Six-party Process

Looking at the range of red and "green" lines that United States negotiators have brought to the six-party talks, we seen an insistence throughout on complete, verified, irreversible dismantlement (CVID) of North Korea's nuclear program before the United States would be willing to grant any concessions or incentives. Washington has also maintained steady economic

²⁰⁷ Pak, Sejin. "Two Forces of Democratization in Korea." *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol. 28, No. 1. (1998), pp. 45-73.

sanctions on North Korea, occasionally ratcheting them up based on increased belligerence from the North.

In the first few years of the George W. Bush administration, security policymakers in Washington were already formulating the general shape of its North Korea policy. Speaking on condition of anonymity, officials involved describe a fragmented interagency process pitting the East Asian bureau of the State Department and some within the National Security Council seeking negotiations with more hard-line voices within the administration seeking to scrap the Agreed Framework or any talks with the North.²⁰⁸ The resulting document was finally cleared in June 2001. It listed four areas of interest for the United States to pursue with the North: nuclear weapons, the conventional military balance, missile technology, and human rights.²⁰⁹ The dominant officials in DPRK policymaking during the first George W. Bush administration maintained a stance largely separate from their Clinton administration counterparts in dealing with North Korea – namely, a lack of willingness to hold direct bilateral meetings with the North.²¹⁰ In addition, the United States' 2002 National Security Strategy mentioned brutal regimes and weapons of mass destruction, the assertion that deterrence is unlikely to work on leaders of such nations, and that preemption may be necessary, with North Korea one of the unspoken targets of this language.²¹¹ The 2002 Nuclear Posture Review went further, specifically identifying North Korea in its contingency war plans.²¹² On December 16, 2002, Bush approved a Presidential Directive on bolstering missile defense that also referred to North Korea by name.²¹³

At the same time, United States military planners worked to bolster military power in Northeast Asia as the crisis unfolded, dispatching several additional squadrons of warplanes to the theater in late January and early February 2003, and on February 6, Secretary of State Colin Powell told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that “no military option has been taken off the table” with North Korea. The Bush administration urged the IAEA to refer the issue to the United Nations Security Council, which it did on February 12, 2003. On May 31, 2003, President Bush announced the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), a multinational consortium aimed at curbing the transport of weapons of mass destruction and designed specifically with North Korea

²⁰⁸ Michael J. Mazarr, “The Long Road to Pyongyang; A Case Study in Policymaking without Direction.”

²⁰⁹ Michael J. Mazarr, “The Long Road to Pyongyang; A Case Study in Policymaking without Direction.”

²¹⁰ “A Top Hawk Joins Flight from Bush Administration,” *The New York Times*, March 21, 2007.

²¹¹ United States National Security Strategy, September 2002 (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf>).

²¹² Excerpts from the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review available at <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/static/npp/npr.cfm>.

²¹³ Michael J. Mazarr, “The Long Road to Pyongyang; A Case Study in Policymaking without Direction.”

in mind.²¹⁴ In July, word leaked to the press that the military was working on a new plan for possible escalation of tensions with North Korea, including measures aggressive enough to worry critics that it would in fact be tantamount to provocation of war.²¹⁵

All of these actions were to prevent North Korea from crossing the first red line the Bush administration put forth: the restarting of plutonium reprocessing, which North Korea did in July 2003, a month before the six-party meeting, when Pyongyang officials said they had finished producing enough plutonium from the 8,000 extracted fuel rods for six bombs. The next red line, which President Bush clearly stated in several presidential addresses, was North Korea going online as a nuclear weapons state, and once the talks were underway, Bush and the U.S. six-party negotiators were insistent that North Korea fully abandon its nuclear programs and submit to inspections – complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement – before the U.S. team would be willing to bring any other offers to the table.²¹⁶

In the first round of talks, chief negotiator James Kelly floated the idea of a joint statement with “vague reassurances” that the North not be attacked, but Washington officials refused to codify this in words.²¹⁷ The United States again dangled the possibility of a written security guarantee for North Korea, this time through the words of President Bush on October 19, 2003, after the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, while at the same time ruling out a formal non-aggression treaty.²¹⁸

The second round resulted in the six countries forming a working group on the talks that would meet more frequently than the regular format. By the third round, U.S. tactics seemed to shift: Assistant Secretary Kelly held two-and-a-half hours of direct talks with his North Korean counterpart, Vice Foreign Minister Kim Gye-gwan, the longest bilateral discussion thus far. Kelly presented a seven-page document, reviewed by China, Japan, Russia, and South Korea, detailing what benefits the North could receive if it abandoned its nuclear program. The proposal was a two-stage elimination of the nuclear program, including freezing and then dismantlement, subject to verification by an international body. The incentive immediately offered was the provision of heavy fuel oil by the parties involved, with “security assurances” and further addressing of energy needs upon completion of requirements.²¹⁹

²¹⁴ “Proliferation Security Initiative,” *Global Security* (<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/psi.htm>).

²¹⁵ *U.S. News and World Report*, July 13, 2003.

²¹⁶ See, for example, Richard Armitage, “Weapons of Mass Destruction Developments on the Korean Peninsula,” Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, DC, February 4, 2003 (<http://www.state.gov/s/d/former/armitage/remarks/17170.htm>).

²¹⁷ Leon Sigal, “Misplaying North Korea and Losing Friends and Influence in Northeast Asia.”

²¹⁸ “Bush Hints at North Korea Security Agreement,” *Arms Control Today*, November 2003.

²¹⁹ James A. Kelly, “Dealing With North Korea’s Nuclear Programs,” Statement to the Senate Foreign

North Korea's reaction was muted, as the United States' negotiators were still requiring Pyongyang to make the first move. In addition, after the third round, North Korea announced it would not attend preparatory working meetings leading up to the next round, scheduled for September 2004, placing blame on the United States' "hostile" attitude.²²⁰ In February 2005, the North announced through its official media that it possessed nuclear weapons.

The United States ratcheted up its defense posturing in response. On March 15, 2005, the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the U.S. Armed Forces drafted a paper that discussed plans to allow combatant commanders in Northeast Asia to request presidential approval to carry out preemptive nuclear strikes on "rogue" states threatening the United States or its allies with weapons of mass destruction. The paper continued by saying that U.S. submarines that make regular port calls in Yokosuka, Sasebo, and Okinawa in Japan are prepared to be loaded with nuclear warheads if necessary. It named North Korea specifically as one of the top threats being taken into consideration.²²¹

Nonetheless, the change in negotiating tactic toward bilateral discussion seemed to hold for at least a short period of time: in the first phase of the fourth round, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice reportedly gave new chief negotiator Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill permission to conduct unlimited number of bilateral talks with North Korea, and he took advantage of this by meeting privately with his North Korean counterpart Kim Gye-gwan before the talks opened, though throughout the round Hill repeated the mantra that the six-party negotiations would yield a result only if it remained a multilateral process.²²² In addition, Hill did not agree to the North's request for a light water nuclear reactor for energy purposes, continuing to reject any future nuclear program for North Korea. Despite U.S. negotiators' prior refusal to budge on the two issues, the agreement at the end of the second and final phase of this round included not only a nonaggression pledge and a move toward future normalization of relations between the United States and the North, but also opened the possibility of a light-water reactor for the North's energy needs.

However, perhaps precisely because of this "backtracking" on prior U.S. tenets such as the light-water reactor issue, the United States negotiating team remained reluctant even to sign the September 2005 Joint Statement – it did so at the China team's behest and to avoid sole

Relations Committee, Washington, DC, July 15, 2004 (http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/congress/2004_h/040715-kelly-34395pf.htm).

²²⁰ "After North Korea's Missile Launch: Are the Nuclear Talks Dead?"

²²¹ *Kyodo*, May 1, 2005.

²²² "After North Korea's Missile Launch: Are the Nuclear Talks Dead?"

responsibility for the breakdown of the talks.²²³ At the same time, this statement was the first in which the United States agreed to reconfirm in writing that it would respect North Korea's sovereignty. On September 15, before the ink had dried on the joint statement, the U.S. Treasury Department told Banco Delta Asia (BDA) to cease its dealings with North Korea or lose access to U.S. markets. Depositors' panic led BDA to freeze \$24 million in North Korean funds. On top of this, Assistant Secretary Hill seemed to reset the U.S. position in his closing speech to the press, specifying that the statement's "appropriate time" to discuss North Korean light water reactor prospects would only be after "complete dismantlement." He went on to say that "the U.S. acceptance of the Joint Statement should in no way be interpreted as meaning we accept all aspects of the DPRK's system, human rights situation or treatment of its people" and said the United States was fully ending the KEDO program.²²⁴ That same month, Bush appointed hard-liner Jay Lefkowitz as Special Envoy on North Korean Human Rights.

It was in this environment that phase one of the fifth round broke down, with the North Korean negotiators requesting bilateral negotiations with their U.S. counterparts, only to be rebuffed, and then departing the talks and refusing to return to the negotiating table. That same month, the United States cosponsored a resolution at the UN General Assembly condemning North Korea for its human rights abuses. In late 2005, U.S. state department officials proposed to Pyongyang to allow Assistant Secretary Hill to visit, but demanded a Yongbyon shutdown; the North rejected the proposal.²²⁵ The March 2006 recension of the United States' National Security Strategy included the DPRK among the states named as demonstrating "tyranny" which "must not be tolerated." The document then goes on to specifically refer to Pyongyang's "record of duplicity and bad-faith negotiations."²²⁶ The April 2006 Track II talks in Tokyo, in which the six parties participated, saw the United States again refuse to join bilateral discussions. The United States also refused to attend an informal Chinese-hosted six-party dinner at those talks.²²⁷

After the North's missile test on July 4, 2006 and test of a nuclear device on October 9, 2006, United States negotiators took the lead along with the Japanese team in drafting the two subsequent UNSC resolutions, pushing for mention of the force-sanctioning Chapter VII of the

²²³ Gavin McCormack, "A Deuclearization Deal in Beijing: The Prospect of Ending the 20th Century in East Asia."

²²⁴ "Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill's Statement at the Closing Plenary of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks," U.S. Department of State, September 19, 2005 (http://www.nti.org/e_research/official_docs/dos/dos091905Hill.pdf).

²²⁵ "After North Korea's Missile Launch: Are the Nuclear Talks Dead?" International Crisis Group, August 9, 2006.

²²⁶ United States National Security Strategy (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf>).

²²⁷ "After North Korea's Missile Launch: Are the Nuclear Talks Dead?" International Crisis Group, August 9, 2006.

UN Charter. In a statement made the day Pyongyang announced the nuclear test, President Bush seemed to have shifted the red line, threatening “consequences” if the North participated in “the transfer of nuclear weapons or material.”²²⁸ Two days later at a press conference, Bush evaded multiple questions about the fact that his administration seemed to have moved the red line from “don’t test” to “don’t proliferate.” He also reaffirmed the conviction that bilateral negotiations do not work.²²⁹

The talks finally reconvened for a brief second phase December 18-22, 2006, with the bulk of energy focused on continued calls by the North Korean team for the United States to free up North Korea’s \$24 million in BDA funds. Despite the continued rhetoric against bilateral negotiations, Washington officials contacted the North Korean embassy in Beijing and set up end-of-December bilateral talks there, and met again in January 2007 in Berlin. At the third phase of the fifth round, U.S. negotiators agreed to the February 13, 2007 Joint Statement, along with the promise that the \$25 million at BDA be unfrozen prior to the first 30-day deadline per the Joint Statement following the talks, much to the dissatisfaction of hard-liners in the Bush administration.²³⁰

Both before and throughout the talks, the United States Treasury and Justice departments have maintained an array of sanctions on North Korea – as of October 2006, at least 40 separate measures against the country as a whole, and at least 15 against North Korean business entities. The U.S. places these sanctions under four general categories: North Korea’s posing a threat to U.S. national security, North Korea as a state sponsor or supporter of international terrorism; North Korea as a Marxist-Leninist state with a Communist government, and North Korea’s alleged proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.²³¹

Range of strategies: While United States policymakers changed their stance regarding whether or not their negotiators could hold bilateral meetings with North Korean representatives at the talks, at first refusing them but later acquiescing, the strategy the U.S. team has brought to the table falls in the middle of the axis between engagement and containment – though closer to the latter pole. With hard-liners in the first Bush administration bandying around threats of squeezing Pyongyang to force regime change, alongside direct threats of the possibility of

²²⁸ “President Bush’s Statement on North Korea Nuclear Test,” October 9, 2006. (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/10/20061009.html>)

²²⁹ See “Press Conference by the President,” The White House, October 11, 2006 (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/10/20061011-5.html>).

²³⁰ “A Top Hawk Joins Flight from Bush Administration,” *The New York Times*, March 21, 2007.

²³¹ Dianne E. Rennack, “North Korea: Economic Sanctions.”

military intervention, U.S. strategies were at first at the very end of the axis toward containment – bordering on coercive, in fact. These tactics saw a slight relaxing in more recent rounds – including President Bush’s pledge to deliver a written security guarantee to North Korea, something denied flat-out at the start of negotiations. However, the incentives offered by U.S. negotiators have been paltry – amounting to “considering” removal of existing sanctions rather than the provision of new incentives, and keeping the issues of peaceful nuclear energy and economic interaction safely at bay. Overall, the U.S. negotiation team has maintained its push for CVID through a steady application of pressure tactics, making it a strategy of containment, indeed aimed at blocking any increase in North Korea’s power.

| Approaches/ Strategems | Red Line(s) | Green Line(s) | Incentives and Pressure Tactics |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p><u>1st</u> – Solely multilateralism; pressure tactics; CVID first</p> <p><u>2nd</u> – Bilateral-multilateral combination; signed tit-for-tat multilateral agreement but still following CVID; refusal to adhere to terms of February 13, 2007 agreement</p> | <p><u>1st</u> – DPRK establishing status as nuclear state</p> <p><u>2nd</u> – DPRK proliferating nuclear material</p> | <p><u>Throughout:</u> Complete declaration and dismantlement (CVID)</p> | <p><u>Sticks:</u> Direct and veiled threats of military intervention and regime change; continued or increased economic sanctions</p> <p><u>Carrots:</u> Security guarantee, (eased sanctions)</p> |

b. Analysis of State Approach

In analyzing the United States’ six-party strategy, realist concerns hold strong explanatory power, as most of the tactics U.S. negotiators have brought to the talks have been reactions to the North’s gain in either offensive capabilities or attempts to cut off its economic supply lines. In addition, while the strong executive seen especially in the first George W. Bush administration helped hard-liners steer North Korea policy, they did so along realist lines,

rendering domestic politics of limited influence. Finally, national identity offers a certain amount of explanatory power, as both norms of preemption and a Cold War dichotomy based on historical experience may have informed U.S. policymakers' reluctance to attempt engagement tactics with North Korea.

i. Realist Concerns

The strategies United States negotiators have employed at the six-party talks point strongly to the primacy of realist concerns, due to negotiators' immediate reactions to shifts in the security situation, U.S. attempts at external balancing against North Korea in the talks, and negotiators' and lawmakers' attempts to block North Korea from seeing any economic gain.

For the United States, objective security concerns stemming from the North Korean nuclear program are high. First, the immediate regional threat to U.S. interests is stark, with American troops stationed in South Korea, Japan, and Guam within DPRK missile firing distance.²³² Second, the economic impact of a conflict in Northeast Asia would also be devastating to the United States. Third, with the rise in U.S. concerns about state or non-state actors waging terror attacks, the U.S. fears the sale of nuclear material to the highest bidder.

Indeed, we see the U.S. negotiating team addressing these security concerns through their tactics at the six-party talks. The range of red and green lines United States negotiators have brought to the six-party talks are based on an insistence on complete, verified, irreversible dismantlement (CVID) of North Korea's nuclear program before any concessions. For example, although the September 13 agreement contains step-by-step, tit-for-tat measures, the United States has said it will not provide fuel aid until CVID is accomplished. In addition, the United States' two main red lines throughout the negotiations have been 1.) testing a nuclear device, and 2.) proliferating nuclear material; both red lines relate directly to security concerns, as do the main pressure tactic and incentive of military intervention and regime change versus a security guarantee. When the North crossed the first red line, U.S. negotiators reacted immediately, drawing up strong sanctions and shifting their tactics from a more hard-line stance to engagement in a strong attempt to 'reach' North Korea, though an attempt still based on security concerns.

Coupled with strong strategic reactions to immediate security concerns, the U.S. has indeed practiced external balancing within its six-party strategy. U.S. negotiators and officials

²³² Dianne E. Rennack, "North Korea: Economic Sanctions."

have tried to rally China, Japan, Russia, and South Korea to ally with it in terms of strategic approach, as well as in executing possible military measures against the North.²³³

It is harder to tell whether internal balancing on the part of the U.S. is directly related to the North Korea issue, as the United States is already the regional and world economic and military hegemon and, as such, practices internal balancing against a number of competitors. Moreover, this strategy has not directly entered into U.S. negotiators' strategy at the talks in a noticeable manner.

Certainly visible in U.S. six-party strategy, however, is the third component of realist calculus: concern about a threatening state's economic gain. U.S. negotiators and policymakers have kept a tight financial squeeze on North Korea, introducing new economic sanctions throughout the six-party process in addition to the ones already in place, and offering very limited incentives, essentially amounting to a 'ratcheting down' of its pressure tactics rather than actual concessions in the interest of cutting off all cash flow to the North.

Overall, U.S. strategies at the six-party talks point strongly to the primacy of realist concerns, due to negotiators' immediate reactions to shifts in the security situation, U.S. attempts at external balancing against North Korea in the talks, and negotiators' and lawmakers' attempts to block North Korea from seeing any economic gain.

ii. Domestic Political Institutions

In terms of domestic political influences on U.S. six-party strategy, while state-society institutions hold little sway over the proceedings, competing bureaucratic pressures do come to bear on certain tactical shifts at the six-party talks – namely, whether or not to engage in bilateral discussion with North Korean negotiators. However, domestic political factors on a whole offer a limited explanatory purview of strategies the U.S. has employed at the talks, including red and green lines and the use of incentives versus pressure, which have remained largely tied to realist concerns.

The structural makeup of the U.S. foreign policymaking process has affected Washington's DPRK strategy at the six-party negotiations in several ways. First, U.S. negotiators' consistent rejection of bilateral talks would appear a result of the United States' strong executive during the first Bush administration, as both Congress and the public had

²³³ See Rumsfeld's memorandum proposing the U.S. ally itself with China in order to isolate and bring about a collapse of the Pyongyang regime, in Samuel S. Kim, "China and North Korea in a Changing World," in *Uneasy Allies, Fifty Years of China-North Korea Relations*.

become dissatisfied regarding the administration's policy of refusing bilateral negotiations with North Korea, even as the tactic continued at the talks.²³⁴ In addition, analysts have deemed U.S. reluctance to use any engagement strategies with North Korea as coming from a "deep-seated...bureaucratic resistance" within the U.S. government of ever trying to negotiate with North Korea.²³⁵

This entrenched resistance began even before the talks, in 2001, when the new Bush administration sought to divide up the task of DPRK policymaking. National Security Council (NSC) nonproliferation officials were given the reins on what could be offered at the talks, which many in the State Department saw as a power grab by hard-liners on the issue.²³⁶ Indeed, these hard-liners would dominate the first George W. Bush administration – an influential group consisting of Vice President Dick Cheney's office, Pentagon officials and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, Undersecretary of State John Bolton – opposed negotiations. State Department faction, led by Secretary of State Colin Powell and later Condoleezza Rice, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, Kelly, and Christopher Hill – believed in negotiations.²³⁷ There was some overlap in these groups, with dialogue people in the NSC and hard-liners in the State, but this overall dichotomy prevailed in terms of policymaking. Speaking off the record, officials involved described a fragmented interagency process stemming from ideological debate between State Department officials and hard-liners in the NSC and president's office, headed by Bush, who has not made his disdain for the North Korean regime a secret.²³⁸

In June 2004, the State Department received more say in crafting U.S. six-party strategy, largely due to staff shuffles within the hard-line camp and continual pressure from the State Department for dialogue; shortly thereafter, the State Department introduced bilateral discussion into the six-party process.²³⁹ The February 13, 2007 agreement was the result of Rice's convincing of President Bush to sign onto the deal, much to the anger of the former hard-line "hawks" who the previous term had quashed dialogue, including former undersecretaries of state Robert Joseph and Bolton.²⁴⁰

²³⁴ Joel S. Wit, "Enhancing U.S. Engagement with North Korea," pp. 55.

²³⁵ Joel S. Wit, "Enhancing U.S. Engagement with North Korea," pp. 57.

²³⁶ Michael J. Mazarr, "The Long Road to Pyongyang; A Case Study in Policymaking without Direction."

²³⁷ Michael J. Mazarr, "The Long Road to Pyongyang; A Case Study in Policymaking without Direction;" "North Korea: Where Next for the Nuclear Talks?"

²³⁸ "Press Conference by the President," October 11, 2006

(<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/10/20061011-5.html>); Michael J. Mazarr, "The Long Road to Pyongyang; A Case Study in Policymaking without Direction."

²³⁹ Gilbert Rozman, *Strategic Thinking about the Korean Nuclear Crisis*; Michael J. Mazarr, "The Long Road to Pyongyang; A Case Study in Policymaking without Direction."

²⁴⁰ "A Top Hawk Joins Flight from Bush Administration," The New York Times, March 21, 2007; "Pact

The decision-making power vested in the U.S. Congress has also affected strategy, contributing to the paltry nature of incentives put on the negotiating table by continually pressing North Korea economically. Human rights have remained the legislative's number one concern throughout the talks, regardless of whether the majority in Congress was Republican or Democratic. This has consisted in Congress' consistently blocking of funds for North Korean aid and passing the North Korea Human Rights Act in October 2004 – which, despite its title, in fact constrains the ability of the executive to provide economic assistance to North Korea.²⁴¹

The second factor comprising domestic political factors – state-society relations – bears little effect on U.S. strategy at the talks. If this aspect has had any effect at all, it would perhaps be in the president's desire to retain public popularity. Bush was willing to turn to engagement in his second term in part due to his then-falling approval ratings with the U.S. military bogged down in Iraq and the November 2006 Congressional elections, which saw Republican control wrested by Democrats.²⁴² Looking for some small victory, Bush turned to Hill and Rice and their belief that the agreement could work.²⁴³ However, this tactical shift is more fully explained by the particular U.S. domestic political structure and the bureaucratic pressures exerted on DPRK policymaking than by state-society relations.

In sum, U.S. domestic political institutions help explain certain aspects of U.S. strategy at the six-party talks. Overall, however, while tactics such as bilateral versus multilateral – including red and green lines and incentives and pressure – have remained along a realist tack. Thus, while there is some explanatory power held by domestic political factors, realism seems to more fully explain the U.S. strategic shifts at the six-party talks.

iii. National Identity

National identity offers a certain amount of explanatory power in terms of U.S. strategy choices at the six-party talks. First, norms sanctioning the use of force in statecraft inform U.S. threats to use military action on North Korea. Second, a historical legacy based on Cold War experience informs U.S. policymakers' leveling of sanctions as well as the lines of balancing drawn at the six-party talks.

with North Korea Draws Fire from a Wide Range of Critics in U.S.," *The New York Times*, February 14, 2007.

²⁴¹ "North Korea: Where Next for the Nuclear Talks?" International Crisis Group, November 15, 2004; text of North Korea Human Rights Act of 2004 (<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.r.04011>).

²⁴² Gavan McCormack, *A Denuclearization Deal in Beijing*.

²⁴³ "Outside Pressures Broke Korean Deadlock," *New York Times*, February 14, 2007.

U.S. norms on the use of force have always included military action as an option of statecraft. In addition, in recent years the Bush administration has pushed a standard of preemption, made official in the 2002 National Security Strategy and put into action the following year in Iraq.²⁴⁴ Both the overarching norm allowing for use of force as well as the preemption doctrine are evident in U.S. six-party strategy: U.S. officials and negotiators alike have introduced the threat of military force on North Korea. This has included officials directly stating the possibility in press conferences, discussing the desire for regime change in North Korea, and negotiators' withholding of a written security guarantee for the North through the first several rounds of negotiations.

In addition to norms, collective historical memory also helps shape U.S. policymakers' thinking on North Korea strategy. U.S. policymakers read the situation on the Korean peninsula through an understanding dating back to the Cold War era, topped off with memories of the brutal 1950-53 war the United States and UN forces fought alongside South Korea with the DPRK.²⁴⁵ A look at the list of official sanctions tells us there are still lingering effects from that historical experience: North Korea's status as a Marxist-Leninist state with a Communist government is the reason the U.S. State and Treasury departments cite for nearly 20 percent of U.S. sanctions levied upon it as of October 2006.²⁴⁶ In addition, balancing seen in the United States' six-party strategies, while also explained by realist concerns, does indeed follow largely along (simplified) lines of Cold War-era regional balancing, with Japan and the U.S. on one side and China, Russia, and North Korea on the other. (Only South Korea has not assisted in recreating Cold War-era patterns of balancing at the talks.)

Therefore, national identity – through norms that see force as a viable tool of statecraft, as well as historical experience of the Cold War – thus factors in U.S. six-party strategy-making.

In examining possible drivers of its six-party strategy, this study finds that the strategies United States policymakers and negotiators have brought to the talks stem from concerns primarily realist in nature.

Given the findings of the analysis, we **do not reject** the hypothesis in the case of the United States – though there are two caveats worthy of mention. First, domestic political

²⁴⁴ United States National Security Strategy (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf>).

²⁴⁵ Eric Heginbotham and Christopher P. Twomey, "America's Bismarckian Asia Policy," *Current History*, Vol. 104, No. 683 (September 2005), p. 243-8.

²⁴⁶ Dianne E. Rennack, "North Korea: Economic Sanctions."

institutions factor into strategic choices, as bureaucratic divisions within government bring a competition of approaches. Second, national identity also plays a noticeable role in explaining the United States' strategic calculus, as well, due to a rising norm of preemption as well as lingering historical memories from the Korean War and Cold War era.

c. Origin Trace of the Strongest Explanatory Factor

[Realist Concerns]

Why are the United States' strategies at the six-party talks primarily driven by realist concerns? Beyond the immediate security concerns addressed above, two main components contribute to a possible explanation; the first is related to recent events, and the other to long-term strategic goals. First, the changing threat environment after September 11, 2001 reorganized U.S. security policymakers' priorities regarding the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Second, the United States' long-term strategic goals, not only on the Korean peninsula but also in Northeast Asia on a whole, call for a reassertion of U.S. strategic primacy in the face of China's rise.

The terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001 understandably reshaped U.S. thinking on its global security priorities. First and foremost, the United States' highest priority became keeping terrorists or 'rogue' states from acquiring weapons of mass destruction.²⁴⁷ Highest among these weapons to watch is nuclear material, the transfer of which to state and non-state actors President Bush has deemed "the single most serious threat facing America today."²⁴⁸ North Korea remains one of the prime areas of concern for U.S. security strategists.

At the same time, a "distinctly American" brand of internationalism entered statecraft. In 1999, George W. Bush, on the campaign trail, spoke of a "distinctly American internationalism" that presented a United States seeking to export its economic, political, and cultural values.²⁴⁹ A year after the events of September 11, 2001, this concept had made its way into the National

²⁴⁷ President Announces Reduction in Nuclear Arsenal November 13, 2001

²⁴⁸ Bush, Kerry Debate Foreign Policy Goals, National Public Radio, September 30, 2004

²⁴⁹ Governor George W. Bush, "A Distinctly American Internationalism," Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, California, November 19, 1999 (<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/bush/wspeech.htm>).

Security Strategy.²⁵⁰ While this may sound more like an intervening domestic variable, the result has been to re-entrench U.S. realism. For, given this shift in thinking, the United States has become increasingly skeptical of the capacity of multilateral machinery to deal with the new “post-proliferated” environment, while it has become more resolved to use its national power in response to perceived threats.²⁵¹ Where multilateralism is inevitable, the United States has challenged its partners to take dramatic steps along the lines of its priorities. Unsurprisingly, these steps often contradicted the partner states’ threat perceptions, as well as the interests and views of their constituencies.²⁵² Nowhere is this more evident than in the six-party process, where the United States has expected the other four parties negotiating with North Korea to support U.S. preferences and positions. These two factors – a changing threat environment, and a “with us or against us” mentality – have served to keep U.S. strategy at the six-party process not only set on realist goals but also steers U.S. negotiators toward a tactic of unilateral decision-making even within a multilateral negotiation process.

In addition to the perception and diplomacy shifts seen in the post-9/11 environment, the United States has more traditional, overarching realist goals in Northeast Asia: it seeks to retain its military and economic dominance in the region. One method the United States has employed is to get peer competitors ‘bound up’ in multilateral processes – though ones in which the United States voice remains the dominant one. Through this method, the United States tries to shut out peer competitors through a combination of engagement and binding. With China’s rise a direct challenge to this, Washington has attempted to get Beijing involved in multilateral processes, foremost of which being the six-party format.²⁵³

These two factors contribute to an understanding of why the United States and its policymakers would view the North Korea issue through a primarily realist lens – though one with a decidedly unique, American ‘tint,’ which involves a changed perception of the U.S. role in security matters after September 11, 2001 and moves to keep not only North Korea but Northeast Asian peer competitors in check, China foremost among them.

²⁵⁰ United States National Security Strategy, September 2002 (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf>);

²⁵¹ James Cotton, “North Korea and the Six-party Process: Is a Multilateral Resolution of the Nuclear Issue Still Possible?”

²⁵² Julianne Smith, “Tectonic Shifts: A New Global Landscape, in Daniel Benjamin, ed., *America and the World in the Age of Terror*, pp. 173-186.

²⁵³ Scott Snyder, “Responses to North Korea’s Nuclear Test: Capitulation or Collective Action?”; Evan S. Medeiros, “Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-Pacific Stability.”

6. Summary of Major Influences within the Six-party Talks

| Country | Major Influences |
|---------------|--|
| China | 1. Realist Concerns 2. National Identity |
| Japan | 1. Domestic Political Institutions 2. National Identity |
| Russia | 1. Realist Concerns 2. National Identity |
| South Korea | 1. National Identity 2. Domestic Political Institutions |
| United States | 1. Realist Concerns 2. National Identity |

Given the findings of the process trace and analysis sections, the thesis – that the region’s rising or current powers (China, the United States, and Japan) will base their six-party strategy upon realist concerns, whereas the less powerful countries in the region (Russia, South Korea) will employ strategies less dictated by international structural pressures and derived more from domestic factors – must be rejected overall. This study finds the following: United States negotiators have brought to the six-party talks a mixed strategy leaning more toward containment, and one indeed stemming primarily from realist concerns related to the North Korea threat. It finds that South Korean negotiators’ strategy of engagement at the six-party talks is fueled by issues of national identity and domestic political institutions rather than by realist calculations. However, while Chinese negotiators seem to follow a realist line of thinking at the six-party talks, so, too, do the Russian negotiators. In addition, in both cases, the states’ six-party strategies lean toward engagement rather than containment of North Korea; rather, both states seem to be balancing against U.S. interests in the region. Finally, the study finds that in the case of Japan, instead of forming strategy at the six-party talks primarily through a realist lens, sees the domestic institutional setup come primarily into play, encouraging policymakers and politicians to bring the non-security related concern of North Korea’s kidnapping of Japanese citizens into its six-party negotiation strategy. In addition, national identity, in terms of Japan’s resurgent nationalism, also factors in its citizens’ and policymakers’ strong reactions to the kidnapping issue.

In tracing the origins of the primary drivers behind these strategies, this study finds that China’s realist drive stems largely from its particular vision of economic and geopolitical growth; Japan’s drive for a resolution to the kidnapping issue stems from jockeying for domestic political

popularity as well as a rapid reconfiguring of its perception of North Korea; Russia's realist drive derives from the Putin-led push to regain a semblance of its historical sphere of influence; South Korea's focus on peninsular engagement comes from a renewed nationalism, its legacy as a "divided nation," and a post-democratization reimagining of national identity in terms of the North Korea threat; and the United States' concentration on realist factors is derived from unique aspects of the post-September 11, 2001 security environment.

VI. Policy Implications and Conclusion

In order to present several implications stemming from this project's findings, I now pull my focus back to the fundamental components that comprise this study's interacting parts. These include the drivers of strategy at the six-party talks – realist concerns, national political institutions, and national identity – and the strategy itself, be it engagement, containment, or a combination thereof. Looking closely at these components will be able to tell us whether or not the six-party structure might successfully function as a permanent security architecture in Northeast Asia.

In taking the drivers of strategy at the six-party talks into consideration, two general patterns emerge that shed light on why agreement on strategy has been such a scarce commodity throughout. The first is that a realist-based model of hub-and-spokes alliances, such as the one employed by the United States, risks being ineffective in a multilateral format aimed at threat reduction if a state and/or its alliance partners hold domestic concerns that are able to co-opt the goals of the alliance. The U.S. system has been in place since the end of World War II; it is imperative that as the balance of power shifts in Northeast Asia, the United States develops a comprehensive policy direction that addresses the economic, security, demographic, and nationalist components behind this shift in power – while taking into account China's new regional role as a rising power in particular.²⁵⁴

The second emerging pattern shows that countries holding primarily realist concerns on an issue do not necessarily agree as to the greatest threat they face. In the North Korea example,

²⁵⁴ James T. Laney and Jason T. Shaplen, "Disarming North Korea."

U.S. policymakers hold the threat as its primary consideration, whereas for other states, the main concern remains U.S. and/or Japanese dominance in the region. However, this problem is likely to continue for at least the short term, if not the long term – for U.S. policy toward East Asia is still “powerfully shaped by the legacies of the Cold War” and inflexible in answering to new potential dangers and opportunities in the region. It thus currently remains impossible to address the problems created by the United States’ narrow military focus and balance-of-power-based calculations in the region.²⁵⁵

In terms of the countries’ strategies themselves, a combination of engagement and balancing is of course the most likely over a protracted negotiation period. However, if China, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the United States expect to see effective results, policymakers in each need a more thorough understanding of the strategies they are attempting.

I turn again to the formulation offered by Schweller (1998).²⁵⁶ Successful engagement requires “no irreconcilable conflicts of vital interests among the powers” seeking to engage the rising state. The engagers must also not judge the rising power’s behavior according to principles that they themselves are unwilling to live by. This calls into question the U.S. and Japanese refusals to allow North Korea to have a peaceful nuclear energy program in the long run.

On the other hand, for balancing to work, defender states must possess mobility of action – they must be able to respond quickly and decisively to changes in the balance of power. The need for a quick response to shifts in power and capability calls into question the dominance of domestic political influences seen in the strategies of Japan and South Korea, which might stymie the required rapidity of course change.

Finally, Schweller writes that neither balancing nor engagement is likely to succeed unless concessions are combined with credible threats, and engagement is viewed as a complement to balancing rather than a total alternative, and vice-versa. This combined strategy approach stands in contrast with the little variance seen in the strategies of containment employed by the United States and engagement employed by South Korea, as well as China’s continued aid flow to the North.

Given all of these conflicting patterns of interaction, the question to be addressed is whether or not the six-party format can be made into a permanent security architecture, as

²⁵⁵ Eric Heginbotham and Christopher P. Twomey, “America’s Bismarckian Asia Policy,” *Current History*, Vol. 104, No. 683 (September 2005), p. 243-8.

²⁵⁶ Randall Schweller, “Managing the Rise of Great Powers: History and Theory,” pp. 24-25.

suggested by both Chinese and U.S. policymakers.²⁵⁷ The first step necessary would be to institutionalize the process by holding meetings on a regular, scheduled basis. Lack of strategy coordination has led to the North leaving the table as much as it has led to stalemate within the group.

Making the format a permanent one would also require the U.S. to be willing to engage in institution-building in Northeast Asia, rather than holding onto its hub-and-spokes model. This may prove difficult, as states employing a realist calculus often harbor skepticism about attempts at cooperative security, which are seen as essentially the reflection of the existing distribution of power.²⁵⁸ Indeed, U.S. actions during the six-party process would suggest their policymakers hold this view to some extent. However, for the U.S., an institutionalized, multilateral security framework could in fact serve to justify and legitimize continuing the U.S. alliance system, while allowing other regional powers to have more direct involvement in managing affairs of regional security. It could also validate China's status as preeminent regional power, and help quell any distrust between China on one side and Japan and the United States on the other.²⁵⁹

Besides total diplomatic failure resulting in a military crisis, the worst-case scenario in terms of the six-party proceedings is that North Korea has skillfully taken advantage of the differences in strategy at the six-party format in order to get exactly what it wants. This could indeed be the case, as North Korea has been able to build its nuclear capabilities.

In addition, other developments throughout the six-party process do not bode well for regional cooperation. Countries involved have progressively adopted countermeasures, resulting in effects not always contributing to wider international cooperation, nor a collective security mechanism in Northeast Asia. Limited international norm-building and dialogue mechanisms have emerged, but alongside nuclear hedging and regional tensions. The degree to which the six parties agree to and follow through with collective action is likely to be the crucial factor in determining prospects for future cooperation on regional security.²⁶⁰

Northeast Asia is a region undergoing major change. While the North Korea threat so, too, is the rise of China, the prospect of continued United States dominance, and the potential rise of Japan as a military power – only a few of many current regional concerns. What is clear from

²⁵⁷ “Zoellick Details Discussions with China on Future of the Korean Peninsula,” *The Washington Post*, September 7, 2005.

²⁵⁸ John J. Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Winter 1994/95), pp. 5-49.

²⁵⁹ Evan S. Medeiros, “Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-Pacific Stability.”

²⁶⁰ Scott Snyder, “Responses to North Korea's Nuclear Test: Capitulation or Collective Action?” pp. 37.

this study is that a solely realist understanding of the dynamics at hand will come up short in explaining state behavior; so, too, will an understanding derived solely from domestic factors. Scholars and policymakers need to take heed of this in order to minimize the potential for tragedy in the region and elsewhere, and maximize the possibility of peace.

| Country | Approaches/ Stratagems | Red Line(s) | Green Line(s) | Incentives and Pressure Tactics |
|----------------------|--|--|--|--|
| China | <p><u>1st</u> – Organizer from sidelines; unwilling to endorse sanctions; primary source of DPRK aid</p> <p><u>2nd</u> – active, cooperative participant; willing to endorse sanctions; primary source of DPRK aid</p> | <p><u>Throughout:</u> DPRK establishing status as nuclear state; Open DPRK defiance of China's requests and interests</p> | <p><u>Throughout:</u> Following China's requests and interests</p> | <p><u>Sticks:</u> Cutoff of oil shipments, bank transactions</p> <p><u>Carrots:</u> Oil and food aid; economic cooperation (constant)</p> |
| Japan | <p><u>1st</u> – Dialogue; pledge to stay in lock-step with other six-party members</p> <p><u>2nd</u> – Pressure tactics; unilateral refusal to adhere to terms of February 15, 2007 agreement</p> | <p><u>Throughout:</u> DPRK establishing status as nuclear state; missile testing or aggressive posturing</p> <p><u>2nd</u> – Continued refusal to address kidnapping concerns</p> | <p><u>Throughout:</u> Denuclearization</p> <p><u>2nd</u> – Reopening of and satisfactory investigation and closure of remaining 10 kidnapping cases</p> | <p><u>Sticks:</u> Sanctions on remittances, trade, transportation; inspection of vessels; threat of use of force</p> <p><u>Carrots:</u> Compensation following normalization</p> |
| Russia | <p><u>Throughout:</u> Restrained balancing against U.S. stance</p> | <p><u>Throughout:</u> Unclear</p> | <p><u>Throughout:</u> Increased economic access/opportunities</p> | <p><u>Sticks:</u> None</p> <p><u>Carrots:</u> Possible debt forgiveness</p> |
| South Korea | <p><u>Throughout:</u> Proposing step-by-step, tit-for-tat initiatives; promoting economic cooperation; Incentives only</p> | <p><u>Throughout:</u> Left undrawn</p> | <p><u>Throughout:</u> Warmer relations from Pyongyang, greater support for econ. cooperation projects, more separated-family reunions</p> | <p><u>Sticks:</u> None</p> <p><u>Carrots:</u> Aid and economic cooperation (constant)</p> |
| United States | <p><u>1st</u> – Solely multilateralism; pressure tactics; CVID first</p> <p><u>2nd</u> – Bilateral-multilateral combination; agreement to tit-for-tat multilateral agreement but still following CVID</p> | <p><u>1st</u> – DPRK establishing status as nuclear state</p> <p><u>2nd</u> – DPRK proliferating nuclear material</p> | <p><u>Throughout:</u> Complete declaration and dismantlement</p> | <p><u>Sticks:</u> Direct and veiled threats of military intervention and regime change; continued or increased economic sanctions</p> <p><u>Carrots:</u> Security guarantee, (eased sanctions)</p> |